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Reading the Transatlantic Gothic Fiction of Walter Scott and Edgar Allan Poe

Williams, George S.

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# **Reading the Transatlantic Gothic Fiction of Walter Scott and Edgar Allan Poe**



**George S. Williams**

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## ABSTRACT

Despite a substantial amount of critical work that has been produced concerning the transatlantic nature of early nineteenth century Gothic fiction, there remain areas that require further examination. While many of the recent studies on the subject seek answers to larger questions pertaining to Gothic and its relationships to social and political debates surrounding the Atlantic world, some of the fine details of these relationships have gone with little examination. By exploring some disparate but important characteristics of the genre from a transatlantic perspective, this thesis looks to fill some of these gaps left by scholarship that has largely overlooked the minutiae of transatlantic Gothic. *Reading the Transatlantic Gothic Fiction of Walter Scott and Edgar Allan Poe* looks to provide more detail about publishing histories, peritexts such as epigraphs and footnotes, the grotesque as a literary aesthetic, and the politics that surround these issues. Each chapter engages with scholarly research on the specified subject and views Scott and Poe's engagement with the subject from a transatlantic perspective.

The first chapter examines the publication histories of both Scott and Poe not only to put these authors in a cultural and historical context, but also to demonstrate that with a shared network of readers, critics, editors, printers, and publishers, both Scott and Poe faced a volatile and enigmatic industry that fueled what some might consider to be a certain lack of confidence or insecurity in their more Gothic literature or, at the very least, the Gothic elements in their texts. In response, these authors began to position their works into a cultural model with an aim to please both the critics who were deriding Gothic fiction and the readers who still craved the supernatural. As I demonstrate in Chapter Two, epigraphs became a way to position their works into a respected cultural tradition, while footnotes became tools to tone down the supernatural by making it more plausible. As their texts were becoming more recognized as works of art, Scott and Poe began to develop and refine their own set of aesthetics. The third chapter explores what would become one of the most relevant aesthetics of Gothic fiction, the grotesque. Finally, Chapter Four briefly examines some of the political ideologies of Scott and Poe not only because politics was such an important part of early Gothic fiction, but also because the first three chapters of this research touch on the political positions of Scott and Poe.

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Finally, I want to dedicate this thesis and all of my academic achievements to my father, who, despite years of overwhelming obstacles, earned his Ph.D. in the Humanities at the University of Georgia in 1970. The University of Georgia awarded his degree posthumously.

**DECLARATION**

This thesis has been composed by myself, and all references cited have been consulted by me. I have researched the work of which the thesis is a record, and declare that it has not been previously accepted for a higher degree.

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George S. Williams

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Date

## ABBREVIATIONS

*EEWN*- The Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels, Gen. Ed. David Hewitt, 30 vols (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1993-2012).

Harrison- *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by James Albert Harrison, 17 vols (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell and Co., 1902).

*LEAP*- *The Collected Letters of Edgar Allan Poe*, 3rd edn, ed. by John Ward Ostrom, Burton R. Pollin, and Jeffrey A. Savoye, 2 vols (New York: The Gordian Press, 2008).

Lockhart- Lockhart, John Gibson, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.*, 7 vols (Edinburgh: Robert Cadell, 1837).

*LSWS*- *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. by Sir Herbert Grierson et al., 12 vols (London: Constable, 1932-37).

Note: Although I refer to Grierson's edition of Scott's letters often, on a number of occasions I cite the letters themselves. I do this for two reasons. First, Grierson's collection does not include some of the letters that I cite because they were not discovered until after the publication of his edition. Secondly, I believe that if I have Scott's actual letter in my hand, there is no need to cite someone else's publication of that letter.

Mabbott- *The Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by T. O. Mabbott, Eleanor D. Kewer, and Maureen C. Mabbott, 3 vols (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1969 and 1978).

## Introduction

In Walter Scott's series of novels published under the umbrella of *Tales of My Landlord*, Jedediah Cleishbotham acts as editor for the deceased Peter Pattieson, who collected the tales from the landlord of the Wallace Inn in the fictional Scottish town of Gandercleugh. This arrangement, of course, represents a complex authorial trail that will eventually lead back to Scott. As Andrew D. Hook notes in a discussion of *The Bride of Lammermoor*, one of the two novels in the Third Series of *Tales of My Landlord*, 'The Bride of Lammermoor is a factually based story supposed to have been written from the notes of a supposed artist Dick Tinto by Peter Pattieson whose account is edited and published by Jedediah Cleishbotham, the persona of an anonymous author'.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, much might be said of the veils of authorial disguise, but it is also important to note how these tales supposedly came to be told at all. According to Cleishbotham, the city of Gandercleugh is situated between Edinburgh, the 'metropolis of law', and Glasgow, the 'metropolis and mart of gain'. With such a central location, Cleishbotham insists that Gandercleugh is the 'navel' of Scotland. Any traveler wandering through the north, be it for business or pleasure, would surely stop at this pivotal location. And even though Jedediah was not the author of the tales, he was certainly familiar with the centrality of the Wallace Inn and the wide variety of guests that visited there:

And it must be acknowledged by the most sceptical, that I, who have sat in the leathern armchair, on the left-hand side of the fire, in the common room of the Wallace Inn, winter and summer, for every evening in my life, during forty years bypast (the Christian Sabbaths only excepted), must have seen more of the manners and customs of various tribes and people, than if I had sought them out by my own painful travel and bodily labour.<sup>2</sup>

The location and popularity of the Wallace Inn allow it to act as a cultural hub, a transnational epicenter where people from all over the world exchange cultural wares. These characteristics are presented to the reader in the First Series of *Tales of My Landlord*. In the final series of *Tales of My Landlord*, however, Peter's brother Paul has sent the remaining unprinted tales to America where they were published without Cleishbotham's knowledge, accordingly closing the series with a final transatlantic

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew D. Hook, 'The Bride of Lammermoor: A Reexamination', in *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* Vol. 22, No. 2 (Sep. 1967), pp. 111-126, p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> *EEWN*, IVa, p. 1.



exchange. Thus the *Tales of My Landlord* originate, evolve, and conclude in a series of transatlantic cultural exchanges.

The *Tales of My Landlord* series holds what may arguably be viewed as some of Scott's most Gothic novels, not only *Lammermoor* (which was one of Edgar Allan Poe's favorite novels), but also *The Black Dwarf* and *The Heart of Mid-lothian*, among others. Scott's Gothic narratives certainly seem to invite transatlantic critical approaches, but, as Bridget M. Marshall notes, despite what some critics claim to be an 'explosion in multiple approaches to the Gothic'<sup>3</sup> over the last several decades, there have been astoundingly few studies of the genre from a transatlantic perspective. She insists, 'Most scholars of the Gothic are clearly rooted in either the British or American tradition; little scholarship exists addressing the transatlantic nature of the genre' and 'transatlantic studies of the Gothic are surprisingly rare'.<sup>4</sup>

Marshall lodged her complaints in 2011, and though perhaps scarce, there are works published prior to 2011 that approach Gothic from a transatlantic perspective. Two notable examples include Laura Doyle's *Freedom's Empire: Race and the Rise of the Novel in Atlantic Modernity, 1640 to 1940* (2008) and Leonard Tennenhouse's *The Importance of Feeling English: American Literature and the British Diaspora, 1750-1850* (2007). Though neither of these works focuses on Gothic specifically, they both contain chapters that discuss the genre from a transatlantic viewpoint. Tennenhouse's monograph, for instance, explores the complex relationship between American literature and the transatlantic circulations that helped to shape it. Considering the Gothic genre specifically, Tennenhouse argues that early American Gothic gained its power from its transatlantic movement, 'by the appropriation of a European fashion'.<sup>5</sup>

There is no way to be certain that Marshall's statement resonated amongst scholars, but there have undoubtedly been influential works published in the last several years that underscore the importance of British and American cultural exchanges in the development of Gothic fiction in the early nineteenth century and beyond. Important

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<sup>3</sup> See, for example, J. E. Hogle and A. Smith, 'Revisiting the Gothic and Theory: An Introduction', in *Gothic Studies*, 11.1 (2009), pp. 1 – 8.

<sup>4</sup> Bridget M. Marshall, *The Transatlantic Gothic Novel and the Law, 1790–1860* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2011), p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Leonard Tennenhouse, *The Importance of Feeling English: American Literature and the British Diaspora, 1750-1850* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007) p. 95.

monographs include Ellen Malenas Ledoux's *Social Reform in Gothic Writing: Fantastic Forms of Change, 1764-1834* (2013) and Sian Silyn Roberts' *Gothic Subjects: The Transformation of Individualism in American Fiction, 1790-1861* (2014). Both of these works explore the relationship between literature and social and political debates of their specified time frames. Chapters concerning the transatlantic nature of Gothic fiction can also be found in anthologies such as *Transatlantic Literary Studies, 1660-1830* (2012) and *Handbook of Transatlantic North American Studies* (2011).<sup>6</sup> Additionally, although collections such as *Transnational Gothic: Literary and Social Exchanges in the Long Nineteenth Century* (2013) and Manchester University Press's enlightening 'International Gothic' series focus more on Gothic from an international perspective, the transatlantic world is at the heart of many of the included essays.

With few exceptions, these transatlantic Gothic explorations examine themes, motifs, and narrative strategies in order to seek answers to larger questions pertaining to Gothic and its relationship to social or political debates surrounding the Atlantic world in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Collectively, these works have provided new insights into Gothic fiction and the ways in which transatlantic circulation and re-circulation have shaped the genre and, of course, how the genre conversely helped to shape social and political climates. However, I believe there are key issues concerning the intricacies of Gothic fiction and the Atlantic world yet to be explored in more detail. This study focuses on framing transatlantic questions in terms of audience, publishing, and some of the formal techniques of Gothic, reading the genre not necessarily from psychological or historical perspectives, but in a slightly more practical way. This thesis seeks to add to existing scholarship on transatlantic Gothic fiction by re-examining some disparate but important aspects of the careers and texts of Walter Scott and Edgar Allan Poe in relation to the Gothic. My research contains a series of chapters framed by diverse subjects, from aesthetics and paratextual oddities to politics and book history, all connected by a common theme of transatlantic Gothic fiction. This research hopes to provide new insights into reading transatlantic Gothic particularly through these frames. Each chapter will engage with scholarly work on a specific subject and view these theories through the lives, careers, and works of Scott and Poe.

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<sup>6</sup> *Transatlantic Literary Studies, 1660-1830* includes a chapter 'Transatlantic Gothic' by Robert Miles, and *Handbook of Transatlantic North American Studies* contains a chapter by Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet entitled 'The Transatlantic Gothic'.

At this point, it becomes necessary to note the limits of my study as a transatlantic one. As this research focuses primarily on Scott and Poe, my use of the term ‘transatlantic’ is limited to British and American exchanges. I also need to elaborate on some of the key terms I use throughout this exploration of Scott, Poe, and their transatlantic Gothic. One of the most difficult but necessary questions asked of any study of Gothic fiction becomes one of defining ‘Gothic’, a notoriously complex task. The difficulty in defining the term has been well documented and debated in recent years.<sup>7</sup> Maggie Kilgour notes, ‘one of the factors that make the gothic so shadowy and nebulous a genre [...] is that it cannot be seen in abstraction from the other literary forms from whose graves it arises’, forms ranging from British folklore and ballads to Ossian, Milton, and Shakespeare. ‘The [Gothic] form’, Kilgour continues, ‘is thus itself a Frankenstein’s monster, assembled out of the bits and pieces of the past’.<sup>8</sup> There are, of course, many definitions of Gothic and many theories of what the term means in relation to a literary genre. In a much-cited essay that appeared in *The Spirit of the Public Journals for 1797*, the anonymous author lists the primary ingredients for a Gothic novel:

Take – An old castle, half of it ruinous.  
 A long gallery, with a great many doors, some secret ones.  
 Three murdered bodies, quite fresh.  
 As many skeletons, in chests and presses.  
 An old woman hanging by the neck; with her throat cut;  
 Assassins and desperados quant. suff.  
 Noises, whispers and groans, three-score at least.  
 Mix them together, in the form of three volumes, to be taken at any of  
 the watering-places before going to bed.                      PROBATUM EST.<sup>9</sup>

This anonymous contributor lists some of what many critics now consider stock characteristics of early gothic fiction: dilapidated castles, secret passages, skeletons and ghosts, murder, secrecy, disorientation, and confusion. The Gothic novel, according to this chef, is a genre for readers to piece together and consume, not one of artistic expression.

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<sup>7</sup> There is a large body of scholarly work dedicated to defining and delineating the Gothic, and practically any survey of Gothic fiction begins with a bibliographical record of the history of defining the genre, but I would agree with Peter Garside that one of the most ‘durable’ is David Punter’s *The Literature of Terror*.

<sup>8</sup> Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995) p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> ‘Terrorist Novel Writing’, in *The Spirit of the Public Journals for 1797*, 2nd ed., 2 vols (London: James Ridgeway, 1799), I, p. 225.

Indeed, Gothic fiction has been notoriously difficult to define, and, in some ways, is becoming more so as new forms of media emerge: eBooks, blogs, vlogs, and so forth. Nonetheless, I find one of the most useful resources on Gothic fiction remains David Punter's formative work *The Literature of Terror*. First published in 1980, a Second Edition was published in 1996. Punter recognizes that assumptions about what Gothic means have changed dramatically during the span of these two dates, and certainly they have changed even more between 1996 and our current date. However, I want to return to one of Punter's descriptions of Gothic. 'In one sense', Punter tells us, "'Gothic' fiction is the fiction of the haunted castle, of heroines preyed on by unspeakable terrors, of the blackly lowering villain, of ghosts, vampires, monsters and werewolves'. These are stock characteristics in what Punter describes as the 'original Gothic',<sup>10</sup> characteristics that also include claustrophobic settings, gloomy themes, threatening atmospheres, confusion, and disorientation. In this sense, Punter defines 'original' Gothic by a stock set of narrative strategies designed to invoke fear or discomfort. In many ways, Punter's definition formalizes the ingredients listed by the early anonymous contributor to *The Spirit*, what we might call his 'Gothic recipe'.

Punter's description of 'original' Gothic seems somewhat simple, but it is useful as a starting point in the overwhelming task of attempting to provide a working definition of the term. Certainly, one can find many of the characteristics noted in the 'recipe' in the works of both Scott and Poe. There are tormented characters, gloomy atmospheres, isolation and confinement, castles, and monsters. However, I should define Gothic more precisely as it pertains to Scott and Poe. In a discussion of selected works by Walter Scott, Fiona Robertson suggests that Gothic is 'a type of fiction which invites readers' fears and anxieties in highly stylized mystery-tales, using a limited set of plots, settings, and character types, and including an element of history.'<sup>11</sup> This definition, in many ways, again formalizes the early 'recipe' for gothic. Robertson continues: 'A novel should not be categorized as Gothic if it makes no attempt to situate the events of its plot

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<sup>10</sup> David Punter, *The Literature of Terror: The Gothic Tradition*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (London: Longman, 1996), I, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Fiona Robertson, *Legitimate Histories: Scott, Gothic, and the Authorities of Fiction*, *Oxford English Monographs*, Gen. eds. Christopher Butler, Stephen Gill, Douglas Gray, et al. (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 70.

in a historical setting, however inaccurate or implausible'. One of Robertson's aims here, of course, is to engage with Scott's novels in order to demonstrate 'their interplays of different forms of narratorial and historical authority'.<sup>12</sup> As such, an element of history is crucial to her argument, and her definition focuses on one of the many important characteristics of the genre. However, in the 'Introduction' to the recently published *The Cambridge Companion to American Gothic*, Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock describes Gothic as a genre that 'goes beyond elaborating and redeploying a specific set of identifiable clichés (ghosts, castles, monsters and so forth) as it gives shape to culturally specific anxieties and tabooed desires'.<sup>13</sup> Again, Weinstock's definition focuses the Gothic very specifically as a genre that addresses social and political concerns and forbidden desires, concerns and desires that were prevalent in America during the early popularity of Gothic fiction there.

Both of these definitions, I would say, are appropriate, though neither is adequate for a transatlantic study of Scott and Poe.<sup>14</sup> For example, if we attempt to apply Robertson's definition of Gothic to Poe, we immediately encounter difficulties. Most obviously, the bulk of Poe's Gothic is not in the form of the novel but is instead found in a large collection of short stories. Additionally, even though some of Poe's tales do include an element of history (the setting of the Spanish Inquisition in 'The Pit and the Pendulum' or the events in 'The Mystery of Marie Rogét', which was based on a true story), many of his most iconic Gothic short stories are notoriously void of easily identifiable elements of time, place, or setting. Likewise, applying Weinstock's definition of Gothic to Scott is equally problematic, most apparently because Scott was not an American. What seems to stand out more than an element of history or commentary on anxieties and desires, what seems to separate Scott and Poe from their Gothic contemporaries, is a sense of plausibility in their Gothic works. Both writers had argued the importance of

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, 'Introduction: American Gothic', in *The Cambridge Companion to American Gothic*, edited by Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017) p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> Fred Botting describes the Gothic as 'a hybrid form, incorporating and transforming other literary forms'. Though Gothic is difficult to define, the fluid nature of the genre allows it to absorb broad definitions rather easily. See Botting, *Gothic, The New Critical Idiom* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 9.

believability in fiction.<sup>15</sup> Scott and Poe employ strategies to transcend the ‘original’ Gothic and their works become plausible sources of fear. Certainly, Scott often refers to history as a source for his Gothic, but it is not only this element of history that makes his Gothic fiction unique, it is also the sense of plausibility this history creates. As Gamer points out, ‘Scott insisted that novels might indulge in supernaturalism and other “improbable” events so long as they cultivate “authenticity” through a strenuous attention to historical detail’.<sup>16</sup>

Poe, on the other hand, makes his Gothic more believable by turning to the darker side of humankind’s inner thoughts and desires, what Poe calls ‘the perversity of human nature’.<sup>17</sup> An early reviewer of Poe’s *Tales* succinctly sums up the traits that separate Poe from his contemporaries,

The present volume is one of the most original and peculiar ever published in the United States. [...] Addressed to the intellect, or the more recondite sympathies and emotions of our nature, they [the tales] fix attention by the force and refinement of reasoning employed in elucidating some mystery which sets the curiosity of the reader on an edge, or in representing, with the utmost exactness, and in sharpest outlines, the inward life of beings, under the control of perverse and morbid passions. Their effect is to surprise the mind into activity [...].<sup>18</sup>

Believability in Poe’s work, the ‘authenticity’, stems from strenuous attention to psychological detail. Gothic, then, when used in this research, refers to a type of fiction that uses a set of stock characteristics and characters to invoke fear or discomfort *in a plausible way*.

This ‘power’ or the ability at which both Scott and Poe excel to alter normal to abnormal, to change the everyday into the supernatural while keeping a strain of plausibility, to present characters ‘with the utmost exactness’, is what I term their ‘Gothic imagination’, a concept that I will explore through later chapters. This Gothic imagination is also one of the reasons that the grotesque aesthetic becomes such an important part of Gothic fiction, a concept which I will also explore in much more detail.

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<sup>15</sup> Scott often discusses the importance of believability when introducing the supernatural into a work of fiction. For a more detailed account of Scott’s attitude towards believability, see Michael Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic: Genre, Reception, and Canon Formation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) pp. 166-205. Likewise, in a review of Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, Poe praises Defoe’s writing and recognizes the ‘potent magic of verisimilitude’. See Harrison, VIII, p. 170.

<sup>16</sup> Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic*, pp. 166-67.

<sup>17</sup> Mabbott, II, p. 53.

<sup>18</sup> Evert Augustus Duyckinck, ‘Poe’s Tales’, in *American Review*, September 1845, pp. 306-309, p. 306.

Given Scott's Gothic imagination, his harsh criticism of works that imitated Radcliffe and Lewis may seem surprising, especially when one encounters his later praise of certain Gothic writers, perhaps most notably Radcliffe herself. But Michael Gamer sees Scott's reaction as a duty he feels he must perform in his role as a literary critic to promote literature that was already popular at the time, literature that was steeped in didacticism and moral aptitude:

Scott's Dantesque descent to that lowest circle of literary hell – gothic fiction – shows him participating unproblematically within the conventions of periodical reviewing, whose task he sees as one of confirming existing literary hierarchies and enforcing unchanging standards of taste.<sup>19</sup>

Gamer's point here is well taken, as contemptuous criticism such as Scott's seems largely rooted in the tastes and expectations that many critics had about literary works in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, though the immense popularity of the genre suggests the reading public was mostly unconcerned with critical reception. Robertson, however, sees a different purpose for Scott's treatment of 'the imitators of Mrs. Radcliffe and Mr. Lewis': '[Scott was] an early supporter of those writers of terror fiction whom he admired as original creators rather than hack imitators', which would certainly explain Scott's praises of Radcliffe, Walpole, and select other Gothic novelists that he viewed as creators rather than imitators.<sup>20</sup>

Though Scott appreciated the artistic talents of some early writers of Gothic fiction, the genre has long had a strained relationship with critics. In fact, since the publication of the first self-proclaimed Gothic novel in 1765, the genre has experienced a history of evaluations dismissing it as simply entertainment or sensation, or merely a style of writing that emerged as a reaction against the reason and didacticism largely expected of Enlightenment texts. Both approaches have seen the genre as shallow, offering little more to the reading public than a way to pass the time, a distraction. Many of the critical responses to early Gothic fiction are contemptuous or caustic. For example, an early reviewer of Walpole's novel *The Castle of Otranto* claims, 'those who can digest the absurdities of Gothic fiction and bear with the machinery of ghosts and goblins, may

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<sup>19</sup> Michael Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic*, p. 34.

<sup>20</sup> Fiona Robertson, *Legitimate Histories*, p. 6.

hope, at least, for considerable entertainment from the performance before us'.<sup>21</sup> Such dismissive and just as often unreceptive criticisms were relatively common towards fiction in general during the late eighteenth and very early nineteenth centuries, and critics were often especially hostile towards texts that evoked the paranormal, whether in the style of Ann Radcliffe, Matthew 'Monk' Lewis, or Horace Walpole.

Early literary critics 'almost univocal[ly]' valued literature that served didactic purposes, texts that preserved 'virtue, propriety, and domestic order', and they typically attacked works they perceived to undermine these values.<sup>22</sup> In yet another example, in a 1797 review of Matthew Lewis's *The Monk*, Samuel Taylor Coleridge disapprovingly refers to Gothic literature as 'a species of composition' that is 'manufactured'.<sup>23</sup> It is clear that Coleridge sees the genre as a mere commodity, another product for the emerging industrial society of the early nineteenth century to mass-produce. However, the underlying issue Coleridge had with Gothic fiction was actually founded on moral grounds, a position that becomes more obvious in his personal correspondence:

I have a wife, I have sons, I have an infant Daughter--what excuse could I offer to my own conscience if by suffering my name to be connected with those of Mr. Lewis, or Mr. Moore, I was occasion of their reading *The Monk* [...]. Should I not be an infamous Pander to the Devil in the seduction of my own offspring?--My head turns giddy, my heart sickens at the very thought of seeing such books in the hands of a child of mine.<sup>24</sup>

Despite his critical review censuring Gothic fiction as a manufactured commodity, Coleridge here specifically targets *The Monk* as morally reprehensible and insists, in strong terms, that texts such as the one from Lewis are not fit for children. Despite this perceived amorality and what seemed to be an obvious economic exploitation of the reading public by Gothic writers, critics gradually began to appreciate fiction and even, although arguably somewhat less enthusiastically, Gothic fiction as well.

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<sup>21</sup> John Langhorne, 'Review- The Castle of Otranto', *The Monthly Review; or, Literary Journal: By Several Hands*, 32 (February 1765), 97–99 (p. 97). Although the review was unsigned, it is attributed to Langhorne. See *Horace Walpole: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by Peter Sabor (London: Routledge, 2013; first published in 1987), pp. 70–71.

<sup>22</sup> Fred Botting, *Gothic*, pp. 21–22.

<sup>23</sup> Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Review of Matthew G. Lewis, "The Monk"', *The Critical Review*, 2.19 (February 1797), 194–200 (p. 194), in *Michael Gamer's Romantic Resources* <<http://www.english.upenn.edu/~mgamer/Etexts/coleridge.reviews>> [accessed 26 April 2017].

<sup>24</sup> Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Coleridge to Mary Robinson', 27 December 1802, Letter 479 <<http://inamidst.com/coleridge/letters/letter479>> [accessed 26 April 2017].



As the genre began to become more accepted as a serious form of art, some readers and critics alike began to take exception to such narrow views of Gothic fiction, finding new meaning and new purpose in the texts. Scott recognizes that the genre holds more than mere entertainment value:

It is doing injustice to Mr. Walpole's memory to allege, that all which he aimed at in the *Castle of Otranto* was "the art of exciting surprise and horror". It was his object to draw such a picture of domestic life and manners, during the feudal times, as might have actually existed, and to paint it checkered and agitated by the action of supernatural machinery, such as the superstition of the period received as a matter of devout credulity.<sup>25</sup>

This statement appears in the introduction to an 1811 edition of Walpole's novel printed by James Ballantyne and Company, of which by this time Scott was co-owner. Here, Scott recognizes more in the early Gothic work from Walpole than mere entertainment, noting a strain of realism and historic attachment in the novel- a sense of plausibility. Though Walpole's novel may not teach a valuable lesson, Scott seemingly argues, it nonetheless realistically teaches us history. Scott's statement underscores a larger cultural movement towards the acceptance of not only fiction in general but also the Gothic form. Scott's comments in the introduction to Walpole's novel also emphasize the importance Scott placed on plausibility when employing supernatural elements in a work of fiction.

Gothic fiction began to draw more scholarly attention as a separate literary genre in the early twentieth century.<sup>26</sup> Influential early to mid-twentieth century critics codified Gothic's response to Enlightenment values in spiritual terms. For example, the primary impetus for the rise of the early Gothic novel, Devendra Varma tells us in his formative 1957 study of the genre, was a 'quest for the numinous'. 'These novelists', he suggests,

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<sup>25</sup> Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story* (Edinburgh: James Ballantyne and Co., 1811), p. xvii.

<sup>26</sup> Rosemary Jackson, for example, suggests, 'unreason, silenced throughout the Enlightenment period, erupts in the fantastic act of Sade, Goya and horror fiction'. See *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (London: Routledge, 1981), p. 57. William Hughes shares this view, proclaiming that Gothic fiction represents a 'challenge to Enlightenment notions of rationality' (*Empire and the Gothic: The Politics of Genre* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003) p. 1). Bakhtin even goes as far as to insist that the 'Romantic Grotesque' is a reaction against the classic values of Enlightenment sensibilities (*Rabelais and His World*). Other critics have viewed the Gothic as motivated by the desire of writers to entertain or amuse their audiences. Allen Lloyd-Smith, for example, suggests that the primary motivation for Gothic writers was a desire to entertain both the readers as well as themselves. Rictor Norton suggests they wrote for the 'joy' of creating a literary work. I discuss these works in much more detail in later chapters.

referring to the writers of early Gothic fiction, ‘were seeking a “*frisson nouveau*,” a “*frisson*” of the supernatural’.<sup>27</sup> The Gothic supernatural is, for Varma, a quest for a spiritual or religious experience, a ‘recovery of the vision of a spiritual world behind material appearances’.<sup>28</sup> Varma draws many of his theories from Montague Summers’ 1938 study *The Gothic Quest*, in which Summers insists the Gothic stems from ‘a spiritual [...] seeking for beauty’<sup>29</sup>, and the writers ‘rekindled the certainties of medieval faith’.<sup>30</sup> Summers’ and Varma’s views of Gothic fiction, and more precisely of Gothic writers, are certainly interesting, if not altogether substantiated by Gothic texts. Both seem to ignore the often-critical stance that Gothic works frequently take towards religion, perhaps most obviously notable in Matthew Lewis’ depraved monk. Nonetheless, they both position Gothic fiction as a reactionary genre taking a stance against Enlightenment values, against the *status quo*, to challenge Enlightenment reason with Romantic imagination and spiritual impulse.

Even though Gothic theory has made significant developments since Summers’ and Varma’s works, in many ways, as Baldick and Mighall point out, some modern scholars seem to have simply replaced the spiritual framework put forth by Summers and Varma with a psychoanalytical one.<sup>31</sup> Freud’s pivotal work in the field of psychoanalysis has been a mainstay of literary criticism of the Gothic genre from the time Freud first developed the theory. Michelle Massé explains one of the chief appeals of the Gothic genre to psychoanalytical discourse:

The Gothic is [...] a genre [...] that is important to psychoanalytical critical enquiry not solely for its ongoing popularity and easily

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<sup>27</sup> Devendra P. Varma, *The Gothic Flame: Being a History of the Gothic Novel in England: Its Origins, Efflorescence, Disintegration, and Residuary Influences* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1966), p. 211.

<sup>28</sup> J. M. S. Tompkins, ‘Introduction’, in *The Gothic Flame: Being a History of the Gothic Novel in England*, by Devendra P. Varma (New York: Russell and Russell, 1966), pp. xi–xv (p. xii).

<sup>29</sup> Montague Summers, *The Gothic Quest: A History of the Gothic Novel* (London: Fortune Press, 1938), p. 398.

<sup>30</sup> Glennis Byron and Dale Townshend, *The Gothic World* (New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 311.

<sup>31</sup> Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall, ‘Gothic Criticism’, in *A New Companion to the Gothic*, ed. by David Punter (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), p. 273. Robert Miles suggests that the most valuable critical approaches to the Gothic genre over the last several decades have come through a nexus of psychoanalysis, feminism, and materialism. Robert Miles, *Gothic Writing, 1750-1820: A Genealogy*, 2nd edn (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 3.

recognizable motifs, but for the affinities between its central concerns and those of psychoanalysis.<sup>32</sup>

Of these central concerns are the ambiguous boundaries separating fantasy and dreams from the real world, repressed desires, and taboos; boundaries that are explored with equal vigor, she suggests, in both Gothic fiction and psychoanalysis. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick similarly writes about these boundaries in her study *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions*, suggesting that the defining characteristic of Gothic fiction is ‘the position of the self to be massively blocked off from something to which it ought normally to have access’, creating an isolation comprised of three dominant elements, ‘what's inside, what's outside, and what separates them’.<sup>33</sup> Nonetheless, the Gothic exploration of taboos and boundaries is often viewed as a further reaction against the reason of the Enlightenment.

A number of critics have also argued that Gothic writers were simply writing to make money. Indeed, Friedrich Engels’ and Karl Marx’s 1848 *The Communist Manifesto* initially integrated market economy with Gothic sensibilities by asserting that they wrote the work as a response to the way communism had been viewed as a ‘specter [that] is haunting Europe’<sup>34</sup>, and Marx’s persistent use of the vampire metaphor to discuss capitalism further supports a capitalist/Gothic connection. Derrida’s *Specters of Marx*, first published in 1993, invited further debate about the connections between socioeconomic concerns and the Gothic literary genre, fostering a further fusion of Marxist criticism to a genre already replete with psychoanalytical discourse. Margaret Cohen furthers Derrida’s theories by aligning herself with what she terms ‘Gothic Marxism’, that is, ‘a genealogy that both investigates how the irrational pervades existing society and dreams of using it to effect social change’.<sup>35</sup> Along similar lines, Franco Moretti fuses Marxism and psychoanalysis to insist that Dracula and Frankenstein’s monster represent two binary poles of the fears of a capitalistic industrialized nineteenth-century society: ‘the property owners and the propertyless

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<sup>32</sup> Michelle Massé, ‘Psychoanalysis and the Gothic’, in *A New Companion to the Gothic*, ed. by David Punter (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp. 307–20 (p. 308).

<sup>33</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions* (New York: Arno Press, 1980), p. 12.

<sup>34</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, ed. by Frederic L. Bender, Norton Critical Edition (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1988), p. 4.

<sup>35</sup> Margaret Cohen, *Profane Illumination: Walter Benjamin and the Paris of Surrealist Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 1–2.

workers'.<sup>36</sup> Punter's *The Literature of Terror* also reads the genre from a Freudian perspective that is 'at no point incompatible with an underlying historical materialism'.<sup>37</sup> Many arguments that approach the Gothic genre with a current of Marxist literary theory focus on themes of money, property, class differences, capitalism, and hereditary wealth that are ubiquitous in Gothic fiction.

As literary critics, as well as book historians, are quick to point out, however, the links between Gothic fiction and socioeconomic concerns manifest in more literal ways than specters and ghosts, symbols and deconstructed texts. Critics have long suggested that Gothic fiction was a commercial enterprise, a genre devoted to feeding popular culture, saturating the emerging literary marketplace with novel after novel of Gothic clichés and trashy texts, all driven by the profit motive. E. J. Clery notes, 'Gothic has often been discussed as a commercial genre par excellence',<sup>38</sup> powered by the perfect capitalist storm: a rapidly growing literary marketplace, the mass production of books, the rise of industrialization, an increasingly literate population, advancements in communications and transportation, and the ideas of *laissez-faire* economics. The genre has been accused of exploiting the public for profit from the onset, a stance that becomes clear in Coleridge's censorious reference to Gothic as a 'manufactured' style of writing.<sup>39</sup>

Despite whatever issues may have provoked Coleridge to attack Gothic fiction from the standpoint of industrial capitalism, he has certainly not been the only critic to suggest that economic profit was the driving force behind the genre. This concept was, of course, one of the central themes in Jane Austen's Gothic satire *Northanger Abbey*, the 'cheap use of literature for profit and self-display'.<sup>40</sup> Clery recognizes that one contributing factor to Gothic fiction's appeal as a commodity was because it was 'the perfect modern

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<sup>36</sup> Franco Moretti, *Signs Taken for Wonders: On the Sociology of Literary Forms*, trans. by David Forgacs (London: Verso, 1983), p. 84.

<sup>37</sup> David Punter, *The Literature of Terror*, I, p. vii.

<sup>38</sup> E. J. Clery, 'Horace Walpole, the Strawberry Hill Press, and the Emergence of the Gothic Genre', *Ars et Humanitas*, 5.1–2 (2010), 93–112 (p. 107).

<sup>39</sup> Coleridge, 'Review of Matthew G. Lewis' "The Monk"', p. 194.

<sup>40</sup> Barbara M. Benedict, 'Reading by the Book in Northanger Abbey', *Persuasions On-Line*, 20.1 (1999) <<http://www.jasna.org/persuasions/on-line/vol20no1/benedict.html#5>> [accessed 2 January 2019].

product for the newly-invented circulating libraries that supplied most readers of the time with light entertainment: suspenseful and disposable'.<sup>41</sup>

Much recent criticism focuses on the idea that Gothic fiction in many ways reflects the social and political challenges faced in the early nineteenth century. David Punter, for example, writes,

Gothic was, from its very inception, a form that related very closely to issues of national assertion and social organisation, and which even, on occasion, could "take the stage" in foregrounding social issues and in forming social consciousness.<sup>42</sup>

Critics have examined themes, motifs, plots, symbols, and language, all to demonstrate that Gothic fiction has deeper implications, that as a genre it often represents a commentary or critique of class structure, wealth, or political and economic concerns.

Scott and Poe both faced mounting anxieties associated with the turmoil of the early nineteenth century: revolutions, industrialization, mass urbanization, and urgent questions pertaining to political and national identities. One chief concern for Scott was the possibility of a violent and bloody revolution in Scotland similar to the one he had seen in France, while Poe's resistance to American optimism and the themes of Manifest Destiny are clear throughout his fiction and his other works. A number of scholars have interpreted the writings of both Scott and Poe as a response to the rapidly changing culture of the period. Robertson notes, 'Critical reaction to Scott has recently been analyzed in terms of the cultural preoccupations it reveals'.<sup>43</sup> In *Scott's Shadow: The Novel in Romantic Edinburgh*, for example, Ian Duncan explores how the political economy and national culture both shaped and were shaped by the booming field of literature, particularly the novel, in Edinburgh between 1802 and 1832 (the year of Scott's death).<sup>44</sup> Susan Manning asserts that the post-Revolutionary 'fragmented union' of the United States was rooted in Scottish Enlightenment thinking. She skillfully compares the intellectual debates of the 1707 Union with those of the American Declaration of Independence. Drawing on 'transatlantic connections', one of her most

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<sup>41</sup> Clery, 'Horace Walpole, the Strawberry Hill Press, and the Emergence of the Gothic Genre', p. 107.

<sup>42</sup> Punter, *A Companion to the Gothic*, p. xi.

<sup>43</sup> Fiona Robertson, 'Walter Scott', in *Literature of the Romantic Period: A Bibliographical Guide*, ed. by Michael O'Neill (Oxford: OUP, 1998), p. 226.

<sup>44</sup> Ian Duncan, *Scott's Shadow: The Novel in Romantic Edinburgh* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

interesting conclusions is that Poe's Gothic ontological work *Eureka: A Prose Poem* is an 'allegorical reading of the condition of the American Union in 1847-48'.<sup>45</sup> Recent Poe scholarship also reads his work through a social, cultural, or political lens. Notably, in J. Gerald Kennedy's *Strange Nation: Literary Nationalism and Cultural Conflict in the Age of Poe* (2016), Kennedy explores the works of Poe and several of his American contemporaries, arguing that the writers he examines represented America and American history in unconventional ways. The tensions between American ideals and realities, Kennedy argues, emerge through their works. Though Poe is only prominent in the chapters that bookend the monograph, Kennedy uses Poe as a central figure because he is 'a lightning rod man, channeling the weird, fatal themes of his culture', and Poe 'had an uncanny ability to discern what was truly strange about the American nation'.<sup>46</sup>

It certainly may seem as though any number of early nineteenth century writers might suffice as subjects of an exploration into transatlantic Gothic, but reading Scott and Poe together, two of the most prolific writers of the time, offers a unique perspective. Scott and Poe are very different in a number of ways, but I will demonstrate that there are also a number of remarkable similarities and reading them together will offer valuable insights into the growth and direction of the Gothic genre. While they both wrote within a Gothic tradition, they both subverted that tradition and took the genre in different directions. Scott's novels, for example, often look to the romantic past, whether following the trials and tribulations of a young Scottish clansman in the service of a French king in the fifteenth century (*Quentin Durward*) or tracing hereditary disputes in the early nineteenth century (*St. Ronan's Well*). Many of his novels work towards a reconciliation of disparate groups: Norman and Saxon, Scottish and English, rich and poor, and noble and peasant. Such readings of Scott's novels underscore the political tensions Scott himself faced in early nineteenth century Scotland, a time when there was much uncertainty regarding the fate of the country. Poe, on the other hand, turned the genre more inwards, reexamining the human psyche. The reader continuously questions the narrator's sanity and rationality, and the events in many of his stories are suspect. With this inward turn, one can read much of Poe's fiction as commentary on American optimism and an interrogation of Democracy itself.

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<sup>45</sup> Susan Manning, *Fragments of Union* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2002), p. 238.

<sup>46</sup> J. Gerald Kennedy, *Strange Nation: Literary Nationalism and Cultural Conflict in the Age of Poe* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. xi.

Even though no extended research has been conducted that reads Scott and Poe together, scholars over the years have noted a number of connections between their works. Jeffery A. Savoye, for example, notes connections between Scott's poetry and Poe's 'Fall of the House of Usher', suggesting that one often-overlooked source for Poe's tale is Scott's poem collection *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. Scott describes Hermitage Castle in *Minstrelsy*:

The castle of Hermitage, unable to support the load of iniquity which had long been accumulating within its walls, is supposed to have partly sunk beneath the ground; and its ruins are still regarded by the peasants with peculiar aversion and horror.<sup>47</sup>

It is likely that Poe was familiar with Scott's collection. He was certainly familiar with Scott's next work *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. So familiar, in fact, that he could recite it when he was a young boy.<sup>48</sup> The fate of Poe's Usher house is similar to that of Hermitage Castle, and there is certainly compelling evidence that links the short story by Poe to the collection edited by Scott.<sup>49</sup>

Scholars have noted other connections between the works of Scott and Poe as well, such as John Robert Moore's observation that the murderous orangutan in Poe's 'Murder in the Rue Morgue' is similar to Scott's devious ape in *Count Robert of Paris*. Arthur Hobson Quinn insists that it was Scott who introduced the aesthetic term *grotesque* to Poe in his review of German author E. T. A. Hoffman, a contention that will be discussed in much more detail in Chapter Three of this thesis. T. O. Mabbott also notices that Poe's 'The Domain of Arnheim' shares its name with the ancestral home of Scott's *Anne of Geierstein*<sup>50</sup>, and that Poe's Hop-Frog is much like Scott's Black Dwarf. There have been connections noted between the light and dark characters Rowena and Rebecca in Scott's *Ivanhoe* and Rowena and Ligeia in Poe's short story 'Ligeia'. Moore goes as far as to claim, 'It is not strange that Poe's indebtedness to Scott has never received full credit' <sup>51</sup> because so many connections between Scott and Poe have been overlooked. Since Moore's claim in 1936, researchers have noted other minor connections between

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<sup>47</sup> Sir Walter Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, 2nd edn, 3 vols (Edinburgh: A. Constable, 1803), I, p. 254.

<sup>48</sup> Peter Ackroyd, *Poe: A Life Cut Short* (London: Vintage, 2009), p. 13.

<sup>49</sup> Jeffrey A. Savoye, 'Sinking Under Iniquity', *Edgar Allan Poe Review*, 8 (2007), pp. 70–74 <<http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/41506023?uid=3738032&uid=2129&uid=2&uid=70&uid=4&sid=21104039281741>> [accessed 5 August 2014].

<sup>50</sup> Harrison, III, p. 1283.

<sup>51</sup> John Robert Moore, 'Poe, Scott, and "The Murders in the Rue Morgue"', in *American Literature*, 8.1 (1936), 52–58 (p. 55).

Scott and Poe, yet there remains no scholarly research connecting Scott and Poe in any serious form or style outside of mostly generic conventions. This lack of scholarly attention may be accounted for by the fact that even though they were contemporaries, in many ways, Scott and Poe were diametrically opposite. Scott is best remembered as a poet and historical novelist, with popular poems and collections such as *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* and *Marmion*, and groundbreaking historical fiction including *Waverley*, *Rob Roy*, and *Ivanhoe*. Many now remember Poe as a poet and short story writer, producing macabre works such as *The Raven*, ‘Annabel Lee’, ‘The Pit and the Pendulum’, and ‘The Tell-Tale Heart’. Scott’s parents were both successful and well respected, his father being a principal solicitor in Edinburgh, his mother the daughter of a prominent Professor of Medicine at the University in the same city. Poe’s biological parents were both actors, yet before his third birthday, his father had abandoned the family and his mother had died, leaving Poe an orphan. As an infant, Scott contracted polio, a disease that left him lame for the rest of his life. Poe, as a young man, was a hiker, a boxer, and an avid swimmer. Scott was a hugely successful and popular writer during his lifetime, while Poe, although well known as a literary critic and poet (especially following publication of the popular poem *The Raven*), was never considered an extremely popular writer during his life, nor was he financially successful at any point. While Scott spent years building his elaborate estate at Abbotsford, Poe often struggled to simply house and feed his ailing wife and her mother. Scott’s chivalric Romantic novels often end with the hero being rewarded in some way, with money, title, blissful marriage, or, in some cases, all of these. Poe’s short stories, however, especially his macabre ones, seldom have a positive ending, nor, in fact, do they frequently even have a hero. Although Scott’s novels do often contain supernatural elements, in Poe’s works, spirits, ghosts, and the paranormal are ubiquitous. Scott’s only attempt at short stories, the First Series of *Chronicles of the Canongate*, proved relatively financially unsuccessful, while Poe’s only attempt at a full-length novel, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, was equally abortive. Neither wrote a successful dramatic play, though both tried. Even today, Scott is remembered as ‘The Wizard of the North’, The Laird of Abbotsford, a well-respected, well-liked, hard-working writer, and Sheriff-Depute of Selkirkshire. Many today, however, remember Poe more as an enigma, a rebellious writer who married his 13-year-old cousin, drank himself out of almost every respectable job he ever had, and managed to make enemies of the literati in every city to which he



moved. Even his death remains a mystery, as someone found him half dead on the streets of Baltimore wearing clothing that did not belong to him.

Differences between Scott and Poe even extend beyond the grave. Following the death of Walter Scott on September 21, 1832, the *Gentleman's Magazine* of London included in their issue a 24-page obituary to honor Scott, which begins, 'Sir Walter Scott, Bart. the proudest name in the modern annals of literature'. The obituary goes on to provide a history of Scott's life and to celebrate his many accomplishments, concluding:

It is by far the greatest glory of Sir Walter Scott, that he shone equally as a good and virtuous man, as he did in his capacity of the first fictitious writer of the age. His behavior through life was marked by undeviating integrity and purity, insomuch that no scandalous whisper was ever yet circulated against him. Of all men living, the most modest, as likewise the greatest and most virtuous, was Sir Walter Scott.<sup>52</sup>

In contrast to Scott's glowing and lengthy obituary, Rufus Griswold published the announcement of Poe's death in the Evening Edition of the *New York Tribune* of October 9, 1849, one day after Poe's untimely passing:

EDGAR ALLAN POE is dead. He died in Baltimore the day before yesterday. This announcement will startle many, but few will be grieved by it. The poet was well known, personally or by reputation, in all this country; he had readers in England, and in several of the states of Continental Europe; but he had few or no friends; and the regrets for his death will be suggested principally by the consideration that in him literary art has lost one of its most brilliant but erratic stars.<sup>53</sup>

We know now, of course, that this is the beginning of a deliberate and relentless character assassination mounted against Poe by Griswold, a litany of half-truths and outright lies that were to haunt Poe's legacy at least up to our current day. Griswold's attack in this first obituary is an unsympathetic and caustic critical assessment of Poe by the very man Maria Clemm had entrusted as his literary executor, and Griswold was just getting started. In 1849 and 1850 he printed a collection of Poe's works, including a 'Memoir of the Author', where he continued to churn out slanders of Poe's character. Generally, he spoke well of Poe's works, but this is likely to be the result of his attempt to appear more objective and less villainous. Griswold was at once ruthless and

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<sup>52</sup> Sylvanus Urban, 'Obituary- Sir Walter Scott, Bart.', *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 102.2 (October 1832), 361-84 (pp. 361, 383).

<sup>53</sup> Rufus Wilmot Griswold, 'Death of Edgar A. Poe', *New-York Daily Tribune* (9 October 1849), p. 2, The Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore.

ingenious in his attack on Poe, always conscious of the power of public opinion, as he demonstrates in his reluctance to sign his own name to this obituary.

There are even differences in the trajectories Scott's and Poe's reputations and popularity took during the two centuries following their deaths. Though Scott was well known for his poetry, the publication of *Waverley* made him almost instantly internationally famous. His financial successes and failures, as well as his immense influence during both his lifetime and following his death, are well documented. His reception, both publicly and critically, and the popularity of his novels seems to have suffered little over the 50 years following his death. However, the reading public generally engages with Scott's works much less today. Poe, on the other hand, was never extremely well known during his lifetime, though he did have somewhat of a reputation as a harsh literary critic. *The Raven* brought him some literary fame, but minimal financial gain. Following his death, it took 25 years for someone to erect a marker on his grave. Today, however, Poe enjoys a secure place in the literary canon. While it took Poe's fans nearly 25 years to place a marker at his burial site, a 'towering pile of characters and arches'<sup>54</sup> was being planned for the center of Edinburgh before Scott's body was even laid to rest.

The differences in the lives and afterlives of Scott and Poe are numerous indeed, but there are also significant similarities. For example, they both published as poets before changing to prose, and they were both pioneers. While Scott changed the face of fiction by looking at the romantic past, creating what some critics claim to be the first historical novels, Poe turned his attention inward, towards the inner thoughts of humanity. They were also both writing for money. Scott's initial financial successes led him to buy and build his estate at Abbotsford, where he often paid much more for the land than it was worth. The financial crisis in Great Britain in 1825, however, left Scott deep in debt, and he spent the remainder of his life feverishly writing to pay off this debt. Poe, on the other hand, relied on his meager income from writing to feed and house his ill wife and her mother. Poe made little profit from the majority of his fictional writings.

In many ways, the writing styles of Scott and Poe are also similar. For example, when one compares Poe's lengthy description of the grand but rapidly decaying Usher house to Scott's description of the Scottish castle Glentanner in *Chronicles of the Canongate*, the descriptions of the structures in the stories are extremely similar on

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<sup>54</sup> Ann Rigney, *The Afterlives of Walter Scott: Memory on the Move* (Oxford: OUP, 2012), p. 158.

several distinct levels. First, both narrators describing the structures are unreliable. In Scott's story, Croftangry is relaying stories that he had heard from his friends, of whom we know nothing. Characteristic of Poe's works, we also know nothing of his narrator. Both passages evoke feelings of dread, yet neither narrator can precisely explain the cause of the emotions they are feeling. Glentanner has about it a 'disconsolate air', while Usher's house evokes 'vague sentiments' of 'insufferable gloom'. Both structures are described in detail: the exteriors, water in front of each house, the windows ('acute Gothic arches' for Scott, 'long, narrow, and pointed' for Poe), the floors, the ceilings (Scott's are 'fretted and adorned', Poe's are 'vaulted and fretted'), the walls, mold and fungus. Scott's narrator describes the exterior as 'resembl[ing] fruit that becomes decayed without ever ripening'. The exterior of the Usher house reminds Poe's narrator of 'old wood-work which has rotted for long years in some neglected vault'. Even the odors were similar, with Scott's Glentanner giving off 'the damp odor of sepulchral vaults', and Poe's narrator 'breath[ing] an atmosphere of sorrow'. Neither structure has a chance of salvation. The lack of effort to preserve Glentanner 'was fast performing the work of decay', while the House of Usher suffered an 'irredeemable gloom'.<sup>55</sup>

The works of Scott and Poe certainly contain stock characters and characteristics of Gothic fiction, yet they transform and complicate these characteristics. Scott's 'monsters' are often mere humans who have been misunderstood (The Black Dwarf, Meg Merrilies, Norna of the Fitful-head); the 'unspeakable terrors' that prey on Poe's protagonists often arise from the characters tormented psyche ('The Black Cat', 'Berenice', 'Eleanora'); Scotts 'ghosts' are commonly tied to familial histories, such as the White Lady of Avenel and the Bodach Glas; Poe's 'haunted castle' is the mansion of Roderick and Madeline Usher. From these examples, we begin to see connections that I explore in more detail in the course of this thesis.

I will begin in Chapter One by exploring the literary careers of Scott and Poe and the business of print authorship, providing a somewhat brief overview of the material aspects of transatlantic exchanges in the early nineteenth century from the perspectives of these two writers. This chapter also investigates how these transatlantic exchanges affected not only their careers but also their writings. Of all the tumult Scott and Poe encountered in the early nineteenth century, few had more of a direct impact on them than those

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<sup>55</sup> Mabbott, II, pp. 392-421; *EEWN*, XX, pp. 32-34.

concerning publication and copyright laws. They both faced an unsettled publishing world, fraught with inadequate copyright regulations and political dealings, and both were acutely aware of the intricacies of publishing. Understanding how these writers negotiated the tumultuous publishing industry of the early nineteenth century also puts these two writers in a cultural and historical context. Scott and Poe were both extremely active within their respective social and political circles and especially active within the industry that produced texts for a growing mass marketplace. They both understood for whom they were writing and, in many ways, created their own audiences. Domestically, they were both directly involved with the publishing industry, not only as producers of texts, but also, at various points in their careers, as editors, publishers, printers, and critics. In many ways, for a number of years, Scott controlled the production and distribution of his literature by being his own printer and publisher. The commercial success of his poetry and his earlier novels positioned him to make lucrative deals with other publishers and distributors, deals that would have been unavailable to many of his contemporaries. Additionally, his vocal Tory views situated him directly within the political arena of early nineteenth-century Scottish politics. Even though Poe was markedly less successful commercially, he spent his career working in the extremely competitive magazine industry of early nineteenth-century America. Not only did he contribute a significant number of texts to a wide range of periodicals, but he also spent many years as the editor of various magazines, and he even owned *The Broadway Journal* for a brief period. Poe was as familiar with early nineteenth-century American publishing as were any of his contemporaries. Like Scott, Poe too was politically active, often openly criticizing American politics. The first part of this chapter explores the national publication histories of these two writers.

Scott and Poe were also published across the Atlantic frequently, and the second section of this chapter focuses on their publications abroad. Scott's novels made a significant impact on the American book trade, and their commercial success fueled a pirating frenzy in the United States. Though having a less dramatic effect in England, Poe's works appeared in a broad range of UK magazines, newspapers, and periodicals, though often without acknowledging that Poe was the author. Both Poe and Scott were acutely aware that their works were being pirated across the Atlantic, and although they both were humored by the unauthorized printing of their works in another country, they approached the issues of pirating in different ways. Additionally, as writing and publishing began to become lucrative enterprises, issues of copyright protection and

intellectual property became more relevant, and both Scott and Poe were involved in court trials that addressed these issues. Copyright issues and court hearings are the focus of the last section of Chapter One. What we see throughout this chapter is a shared network of publishers, printers, readers, critics, and other authors. A brief overview of the publication history is a logical starting point for this research because it explores some of the ways in which transatlantic exchanges affected the works of Scott and Poe and it puts them in a social and historical context. This chapter shows that both Scott and Poe faced a volatile and enigmatic industry that fueled what some might consider a certain lack of confidence or insecurity in their more Gothic literature or, at the very least, the Gothic elements in their texts.

In Chapter Two, I turn to what Gérard Genette has termed ‘peritexts’, which is the text associated with a work that is not a part of the main text, such as epigraphs, footnotes, titles, prefaces, chapter headings, and poems or stories within the main text. In the first three sections of this chapter, I formulate a theory of classification for the categories of peritext that I explore in the later parts of this chapter. The fourth section examines epigraphs and how writers of Gothic fiction employ them to add what one might consider a sense of legitimacy to their works. In section five, I investigate how writers of Gothic fiction used footnotes to add a sense of plausibility to the supernatural in Gothic fiction. Epigraphs and footnotes work together to present Gothic fiction as a serious art form by addressing early critical responses to the genre while maintaining the capacity to entertain an audience eager for the supernatural and bizarre.

Building on a new confidence that their literature was indeed a form of art, Chapter Three focuses on Scott and Poe more clearly defining their aesthetic values, specifically, the grotesque. I believe the grotesque to be one of the most vital aesthetics of Gothic fiction from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Especially since Wolfgang Kayser first published *The Grottesque in Art and Literature* in 1957, scholars have debated how to define the term, and even how to identify the grotesque in literature. I will argue that by examining the works of Scott and Poe, one can more precisely define the term. It is, in fact, in the works of Scott and Poe that the grotesque first became used as a literary aesthetic. The first part of this chapter examines how the grotesque emerged as a significant characteristic of their writings and explores how Scott and Poe came to understand the aesthetic. In the next section, the focus shifts to understanding how these two writers employed the grotesque in their Gothic works, often criticizing social and political constructs.

Because so many of the works of fiction written by Scott and Poe contain commentary on a variety of social and political issues, it is easy to misinterpret some of their ideologies. As such, Chapter Four explores some of the expressed political views of Scott and Poe as they relate to the wider concerns of this transatlantic Gothic study. This chapter certainly grounds Scott and Poe within their respective political arenas, but it also explores some of their political concerns and how these concerns appear throughout their Gothic fictions. In fact, some of the political anxieties that Scott and Poe express are remarkably similar in nature. They are at least similar enough to question critics who separate British and American Gothic genres based on cultural and political differences. For instance, both writers feared civil unrest, mob rule, governments unconcerned with the welfare of its citizens, and voter reformation that would expand the electorate to include 'unwashed artificers' and 'democratic rabble'. While the first half of this chapter focuses on some of Scott's political views and how they manifest throughout his works, the second half explores Poe's often misinterpreted criticism of the early American political arena.

## Chapter One

### Scott, Poe, and the Business of Print

The material dimensions of the book have rightly become a subject undergoing an intense study by modern scholars, especially those in the growing interdisciplinary field that has become known as ‘the history of the book’. The importance of studying book history was articulated by Robert Darnton in the early 1980s, in his innovative and influential theory of the ‘communications circuit’. Darnton points out that books travel through a series of social circles- authors, editors, publishers, printers, distributors, critics, and finally coming full circle back to the author. ‘Authors are readers themselves’, Darnton insists. ‘By reading and associating with other readers and writers, they form notions of genre and style and a general sense of the literary enterprise which affects their texts’.<sup>1</sup> More recently, Leslie Howsam insists that the book (defined in its broadest sense) ‘is a *cultural transaction* – a relationship of communication and exchange that operates within a culture and a political economy’.<sup>2</sup> These theories demonstrate the symbiotic relationship that exists between literature and the culture in which the texts were created. In other words, while literature may often cater to public and critical tastes, it also helps to shape those tastes. Such lines of thought become extremely relevant to literary works from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when norms of the trade were just being established and there was a largely unregulated exchange of texts on both sides of the Atlantic, as well as across the Atlantic. Readership and popularity were becoming increasingly important.

In tracing the history of printed texts, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries have also been well documented as an era in which fiction begins to emerge as a profitable commodity. Through technological advancements in areas such as transportation, communication, manufacturing, papermaking, and printing, combined with a growing literate middle class, ‘reading [was] to become a key aspect of mass culture’, creating an often unpredictable and volatile publishing industry working to provide printed texts for a society that was becoming increasingly more informed and more literate.<sup>3</sup> There were a number of side effects once these texts became valuable

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Darnton, ‘What Is the History of Books?’, in *The Book History Reader*, 2nd edn, ed. by David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 9–26 (p. 11).

<sup>2</sup> Leslie Howsam, *The Cambridge Companion to the History of the Book* (Cambridge: CUP, 2015), p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery, *An Introduction to Book History*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2005), pp. 87–88.

commodities, including the rapid growth of publishing as a lucrative industry, an expansion in the transatlantic exchange of ideas and concerns, and issues such as intellectual property and copyright becoming even more relevant. These factors created complex relationships between author, publisher, bookseller, and reader, what Darnton describes as the communications circuit.

Particularly in the case of Walter Scott and Edgar Allan Poe, these multifaceted relationships have received considerable attention. Few studies of Scott's career, for instance, fail to recognize the role his ownership of both a publishing firm and a printing office played in his near financial destruction, and the effects his position as an author, publisher, and printer had on his professional life. Likewise, many studies of Poe at least consider his often-troubled career in the American magazine industry, not only as a writer, but also as an editor, proofreader, and, if even for a very brief period, proprietor. It would certainly be misleading, however, to suggest that one should consider either Scott or Poe to be typical case studies of early nineteenth-century publishing history. In fact, they are both atypical, and for very different reasons.

Scott was by far the most successful writer of his time. Even before his widely popular novels began to be published in 1814, he had already transformed worldwide perceptions of Scotland through his unprecedentedly successful poetry. Prior to his financial collapse in 1825, Scott had already afforded a huge estate in the Scottish Borders, owned both a publishing firm and a printing house, and was able to make lucrative publishing deals with a number of companies. In stark contrast is Poe's life of poverty. In almost every attempt to publish a book, publishers met him with resistance, and often even contempt. Though he did gain some notoriety, especially with his literary reviews and the popular poem *The Raven*, he saw little financial reward. Regardless of how critics view their works in modern terms, Scott and Poe represent the extreme ends of early nineteenth-century publishing success.

It is precisely because their cases are uncommon that reading Scott and Poe together becomes so intriguing. Most general studies of early nineteenth-century publishing and the literary marketplace focus on understanding the typical or normative publishing processes, meaning that few focus on either Scott or Poe because they provide a skewed



view of the industry.<sup>4</sup> Studying Scott and Poe together, however, allows us to consider publishing relationships in the extremes rather than in general, to cast a stark light on literary success and failure, and to demonstrate the mutability of Darnton's communications circuit. This research is by no means an exhaustive survey of the publishing business, but it does raise key issues concerning the transatlantic nature of the material aspects of publishing and print authorship.

Even though Scott and Poe in some ways represent what one might consider the opposite ends of the publishing spectrum, there are several parallels in their careers that make studying their publication histories side by side even more intriguing. Both were uniquely sensitized to the vicissitudes of the book market, Scott as a writer, printer, and publisher, and Poe as a writer, editor, and magazine owner. Both were aware that their works were being published, and in fact pirated, across the Atlantic. Both were inventing new genres. Scott and Poe also provide excellent subjects for a discussion on intellectual property and copyright because not only did both writers discuss these issues in their works, they were also both litigants in court trials in their lifetimes, and each brought up issues relating to intellectual property.

In addition to the parallels outlined above, Scott and Poe also began their respective literary careers similarly by publishing what many might consider less risky works. For Scott, these early publications often included translations or collections of ballads or works from other writers. Poe's early publications were largely collections of poetry modeled after popular British poets, which, although certainly no guarantee for success, was unquestionably the most popular form of literature at the time.<sup>5</sup> It was only through the demands and pressures of publishers and readers that they each broadened their literary output to include the novel and the short story, forms that in many ways would come to define them.

Through an analysis of publication records, personal correspondence, records of legal battles, and, of course, the writings, both fiction and nonfiction of Scott and Poe, this chapter focuses on what I consider to be three of the most relevant and critical areas

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<sup>4</sup> Finkelstein and McCleery's *Introduction to Book History* only slightly acknowledges Scott and makes no mention of Poe. *The Perils of Print Culture* by Eve Patten and Jason McElligot mentions neither Scott nor Poe. Likewise, *The Cambridge Companion to the History of the Book* makes no mention of either Scott or Poe.

<sup>5</sup> Stuart Curran suggests Romantic-period British culture was 'simply mad for poetry'. Stuart Curran, *Poetic Form and British Romanticism* (Oxford: OUP, 1990), p. 15. For tangible evidence supporting this claim, see William St Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: CUP, 2004).

where relationships formed between these writers and the publishing industries and book markets in which they operated: domestic publications, publications abroad and transatlantic transmission and reception of contemporary ideas and concerns, and the evolving concepts of intellectual property and copyright protection. This chapter sets the framework for more in-depth discussions of these ideas to which I return in later chapters.

I begin by positioning Scott and Poe within the context of their respective national publishing industries, exploring how they both sought to appeal not only to the emerging mass marketplace but also to critics. This is an important aspect of both authors' careers and literary directions. I return to the idea of appealing to both critic and reader in Chapter 2 in a discussion of how peritexts are employed to attempt to make supernatural elements in their works seem more believable, thereby integrating enough sensationalism to appeal to the reading public yet not too much to offend the critic.

Following an exploration of publications in their native countries, the discussion moves to publications abroad. I will provide a broad outline of Scott's publications in the United States as well as an overview of Poe's publications in Great Britain. Examining publications abroad reveals how Scott and Poe addressed the problems associated with copyright laws and pirated works, but also provides some understanding of how the lack of sufficient copyright laws fueled a growth of transatlantic cultural exchange. The transatlantic circulation of ideas and concerns resurfaces in Chapter Four in an exploration into Scott's and Poe's political ideologies.

Finally, I will examine the increasingly critical issues relating to copyright protection and intellectual property, mostly through the lens of the personal and legal battles of Scott and Poe. Outside of his duties as Sheriff-Depute of Selkirkshire, Scott appeared in court in 1826, as a plaintiff against his long-time publisher Archibald Constable. Likewise, Poe filed a lawsuit in the court of New York in 1836 seeking damages for libel against the New York newspaper *The Evening Mirror*.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> It should be noted here that the publication histories of both Scott and Poe are extremely complicated, and this chapter certainly makes no attempt to provide a thorough examination of either of these author's complete careers. As Fiona Robertson points out, 'No single text offers readers an entirely untroubled route through the complex compositional and publication history of Scott's novels' ('Walter Scott', in *Literature of the Romantic Period: A Bibliographical Guide*, ed. by Michael O'Neill (Oxford: OUP, 1998)). The same can certainly be said of Poe. For a detailed account of the publishing histories of Scott's novels, the Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels provide invaluable resources. For details on Poe's history of publishing, the best source remains T. O. Mabbott's 3 volume edition *The Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe* and Burton R. Pollin's continuation of Mabbott's work in the 5 volume *The Collected Writings of Edgar Allan Poe*.

### Domestic Publishing and the Marketplace

Walter Scott began his literary career by publishing a series of translations and collections of other writers' works. His first publication was a translation of German author Gottfried August Bürger's ballads 'Lenore' and 'Der Wilde Jäger' ('The Wild Huntsman') published under the title *The Chase and William and Helen: Two Ballads* in October of 1796. There was little risk involved for Scott, either financially or to his reputation, in translating Bürger's 'Lenore' into the anglicized 'William and Helen', for he was certainly not the first to do so. The German ballad had already been translated into a number of languages, including English, and had proven extremely popular throughout Europe.<sup>7</sup> Scott followed the translation of Bürger's ballads with the translation of another German writer, Johann Wolfgang Goethe. Scott translated his tragic play *Goetz von Berlichingen* into English in 1799. *An Apology for Tales of Terror* was also printed in 1799, the title alluding to the anticipated collaboration between Scott and Gothic writer Matthew 'Monk' Lewis that had long been delayed. *Apology* contained Scott's earlier translations from German as well as works from Southey, Lewis, and John Aikin.<sup>8</sup> Lewis's collection was finally printed in 1800 under the title *Tales of Wonder*, and again included Scott's translations. None of these published works proved extremely influential, nor were they big sellers. In fact, it is believed that a mere twelve copies of *Apology* were actually printed. The significance of *Apology* lies in the fact that it was the first collaboration between Scott and his old schoolmate and lifelong printer James Ballantyne, a relationship that would become much more complicated and significant later in Scott's life. Another characteristic that stands out in these early publications is that Scott intentionally engages with what Wordsworth would later call 'stupid German Romanticism', a literature steeped in Gothic clichés, conventions, and tropes. Scott claims to have distanced himself from the 'German madness' before publishing his next work, an issue that will be discussed in much more detail in Chapter 2. Despite the fact

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<sup>7</sup> William Taylor translated the ballad into English in 1790. See David Chandler, 'Taylor, William (1765–1836)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27092>> [accessed 14 April 2017]. John George Robertson alludes to the popularity of the poem throughout Europe, suggesting, "[Lenore] exerted a more widespread influence than perhaps any other short poem in the literature of the world. [...] like wildfire, this remarkable ballad swept across Europe, from Scotland to Poland and Russia, from Scandinavia to Italy'. See John G. Robertson, *A History of German Literature* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1902), p. 304.

<sup>8</sup> Sir Walter Scott, *An Apology for Tales of Terror* (Kelso: Kelso Mail Office, 1799).

that these early publications were not very popular, they did demonstrate that Scott possessed a talent for poetry.

It was Scott's next published work that first vaulted him into the international spotlight. *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* was published in three volumes between 1802 and 1806, with 1,000 copies of the first edition of Volume 1 selling out in only six months. Though there were several original poems from Scott in the collection, most were ballads that he and a number of his friends had collected throughout Scotland. The driving force behind the publication of this poetic collection was 'historical and patriotic rather than poetic'.<sup>9</sup> Even at this early stage in Scott's literary career, it is already apparent that one of the purposes of his literature was to write a national narrative for Scotland, an attempt to retain some of the 'peculiar features'<sup>10</sup> of his native country. The collection gained Scott critical praise worldwide and launched his career as an internationally acclaimed poet, novelist, essayist, and literary reviewer.

While Scott's introduction into the world of literary productions began with several publications of collections and translations of others' works, Poe's induction into the world of publishing was much less glamorous and markedly less successful. Despite lackluster sales and little recognition, Poe's early works were, in many ways, productions that did not stray far from the style of popular Romantic poetry of the day. Though his early poetry was in many respects original, the poems show a heavy influence from some of the most popular British poets of the period, most notably Byron and Milton as well as Irish poet Thomas Moore. Poe's first published work came while he was training for his appointment as an artilleryman in the Army in 1827, a collection of poems entitled *Tamerlane and Other Poems: By a Bostonian*. Little is known about the publication of this collection or the Baltimore publisher Calvin Thomas, and estimates of the number of published copies have ranged from as few as forty to as many as 200.<sup>11</sup> The collection seems to have made almost no impact, and no reviews of the work from Poe's contemporaries have been located. Though this collection consists of original poetry, there is a Byronic influence throughout, notably including a work entitled 'Imitation' (of

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<sup>9</sup> John Buchan, *Sir Walter Scott* (London: Cassell & Co., 1932), p. 60.

<sup>10</sup> Scott, *Minstrelsy*, I, p. cxxxi.

<sup>11</sup> Harrison estimates 40 (Harrison, I, p. 66) while Mabbott suggests much higher, closer to 200 (Mabbott, I, p. xxx).

Byron) and another which is prefaced by a passage from Byron's *Island*.<sup>12</sup> In Poe's 'Imitation', by way of example, lines 6-10 read:

With a wild, and waking thought  
Of beings that have been,  
Which my spirit hath not seen.  
Had I let them pass me by,  
With a dreaming eye!<sup>13</sup>

As Mabbott points out, Byron's poem 'The Dream' heavily influences Poe's work:

They leave a weight upon our waking thoughts,  
[...]  
With beings brighter than have been, and give  
A breath to forms which can outlive all flesh.  
[...]  
I would recall a vision which I dreamed  
Perchance in sleep—for in itself a thought,  
A slumbering thought, is capable of years,  
And curdles a long life into one hour (ll. 7, 21-22, 23-26).<sup>14</sup>

Byron's poem concerns his unrequited love for Mary Chaworth, while Poe is lamenting his failed attempt to wed Elmira Royster.<sup>15</sup>

Byron's influence is evident in Poe's 'Imitation'. Byron also inspired the title poem of the collection, 'Tamerlane', but this poem also makes it clear that Poe had fame on his mind at a very early stage in his career. 'Tamerlane' is an epic poem that tells of a Turkish leader who left his childhood love behind as he searched for fame and power. On his deathbed, Tamerlane regrets having traded love for fame. Tamerlane's journey is, in many readings, an allegory for Poe's own life at the time he wrote the poem. Poe had left his fiancée Sarah Elmira Royster in Richmond as he set off to attend the University of Virginia. When Poe returned home, he found Royster engaged to someone else, and Poe had missed his opportunity to wed her. It would be two years before Poe would publish again.

The next published work from Poe was another collection of poetry still influenced by popular British poets. In 1829, after receiving a discharge from the Army, Poe sent

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<sup>12</sup> Edgar Allan Poe, *Tamerlane and Other Poems: By a Bostonian* (Boston: Calvin F. S. Thomas, 1827), p. 30.

<sup>13</sup> Mabbott, I, p. 75.

<sup>14</sup> *The Works of Lord Byron, Including the Suppressed Poems*, ed. by J. W. Lake (Philadelphia: Henry Adams, 1829), pp. 516–17.

<sup>15</sup> Mabbott, I, pp. 75-76.

the collection, titled *Al Araaf, Tamerlane and Minor Poems*, to Isaac Lea of Carey, Lea & Carey in hopes that the firm would publish it. Lea had agreed to print the collection if Poe could guarantee the publishing cost of \$100, but when Poe appealed to his stepfather for the money, Allan furiously refused.<sup>16</sup> Poe then turned to the Baltimore firm Hatch and Dunning, who agreed to publish *Al Araaf, Tamerlane and Minor Poems* (1829), though it is likely that Poe made little if any monetary gains from the work. By Poe's own admission, this collection of poems differed from his earlier collection in that Byron did not have a major influence on them. In the same letter to his stepfather asking to finance the publication, Poe writes, 'I have long given up *Byron* as a model — for which, I think, I deserve some credit'. Though Poe did seem to give up on Byron, he adopted Milton and Moore.<sup>17</sup>

One characteristic that stands out in the early publications of both Scott and Poe, notwithstanding the enormous disparity in the levels of commercial success, is that both writers seem to avoid taking much risk in their publications, largely limiting their productions to types of works that had already proven successful in the marketplace. Scott borrowed from popular German writers, rewrote Scottish ballads, and collected materials from other authors or from an oral tradition that in a way separated him from the responsibility of ownership. Likewise, the popular styles of British Romanticism heavily influenced Poe's first publications, but he also first published anonymously, also separating himself from the responsibility of ownership. Scott's early success with his translations and collections combined with the financial security that came with his government position meant there was initially no need for him to move beyond the proven successes of the poetic format, at least from a financial perspective. Likewise, Poe's attempts to break through the American publishing industry meant he would also largely confine his creative works to the poetic form, a form that seemed to hold the most potential for a successful literary career for an American writer. The publishing industry and the marketplace would come to have a major influence in the literary directions of both of these writers, and when viewed from a perspective of the material issues

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<sup>16</sup> In the margins of the letter Poe sent to John Allan dated May 29, 1829 asking for money to publish the work, John Allan wrote, 'replied to Monday 8th June 1829/ strongly censuring his conduct — & refusing any aid'. See *LEAP*, I, pp. 30–31.

<sup>17</sup> *LEAP*, I, p. 30. Even though Moore's influence on Poe's later poetry is widely accepted, Nancy Baxter suggests that Moore's influence can be found in Poe's poetry even before he declares that he has given up on Byron. See Nancy Niblack Baxter, 'Thomas Moore's Influence on "Tamerlane"', *Poe Newsletter*, 2.2 (1969), 36-38 (p. 37).

involved with publishing, the complex relationships between their texts and public and critical tastes becomes clearer. Frictions with publishers, critics, and readers in many ways would drive both Scott and Poe to try other forms of literature, such as the historical novel and the macabre short story. These frictions and both Scott and Poe's movements into other media can perhaps best be demonstrated by exploring the publication histories of one of Scott's and one of Poe's more commercially successful works and then one of each of their works that one might consider much less successful.

Both Scott and Poe would publish a text that would not only come to define them in many ways but one that also went well beyond the less risky limitations seen in their early publications. For Scott, this work would be his first novel *Waverley*, published in 1814 by prosperous London bookseller Archibald Constable. Scott's early collection of poems *Minstrelsy* had gotten the attention of Constable, who, in 1804, first published a collection that Scott had edited entitled *Sir Tristrem: A Metrical Romance of the Thirteenth Century; by Thomas the Rhymer* (yet another book in which someone else's work plays a prominent role). Constable had also played a vital role in publishing *The Edinburgh Review*, for which Scott had submitted several critical reviews the previous year. Surprisingly, Constable offered Scott £700 for the copyright to *Waverley*, despite the fact that at the time, some did not consider the novel to be a respectable form of literature, a fact that led Scott to publish the work anonymously. After the novel was published, Scott would write to his friend Morritt, 'I am not sure it would be considered quite decorous of me, as a Clerk of Session, to write novels'. Scott refused Constable's generous offer, insisting that £700 was too much if the work was a failure and not enough if it were successful. What seems clear, however, is that Scott's early success in publishing poetry put him in a unique position to negotiate with publishers and in many ways, control the production of his texts.

If not completely born out of the pressures and frictions of a tumultuous publishing industry, *Waverley* certainly grew up there.<sup>18</sup> Scott began writing *Waverley* in 1805, at the height of the success of *Minstrelsy*, but when he showed the novel to his friend William Erskine, he was discouraged from continuing. Of course, at this point in Scott's career, there was certainly no financial necessity for him to continue writing the novel. He was earning a comfortable living on his salary as the Sheriff-Depute of Selkirkshire

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<sup>18</sup> I give a very brief and incomplete overview of the publication history of *Waverley* here to underscore the many roles Scott took on in the production of this text. However, Peter Garside provides a detailed account of the publishing history of *Waverley* in *EEWN*, I.

as well as the profits from his poetry. According to Scott's account, he rediscovered the manuscript for *Waverley* by accident in 1813 and continued to work on it then. Though this may be true, he certainly had other motivations for proceeding with the novel in 1813, shortly after the publication of his poem *Rokeby*. Scott had borrowed money against anticipated sales of *Rokeby*, and it is likely that poor sales of the work led him to search for other sources of income. *Waverley* would certainly become that new source. Scott's proven success as a poet led Constable to make such a generous offer for *Waverley* even after seeing only the first volume. Scott completed the next two volumes quickly, and the novel was published on 7 July 1814 in three volumes.

*Waverley* was extremely popular from the very beginning, and the profits from its publication were split between Scott and Constable. The first edition of 1,000 copies sold out in just over a month, with subsequent editions selling quickly as well. Both the second edition of 2,000 copies and the third edition of 1,000 were published before the end of the year. The years 1815, 1816, and 1817 all saw new editions printed. Scott realized almost immediately that writing novels, venturing beyond the scope of poetic works, could be a lucrative enterprise. Scott's first novel was so influential that nearly all of his subsequent novels were advertised as having been written 'By the author of *Waverley*', and have been collectively known as the *Waverley* novels. But Scott was more than just the author. Among other roles, he was also his own manager. Following the publication of the second edition of *Waverley*, Scott writes to his friend and business partner John Ballantyne:

I [...] inclose [sic] a letter to Constable with a dra[ft]. on him for £400. [...] if he does not accept the bill James has already paved the way for dealing with Murray & you may correspond with him in name of the Author of W[averley] to accept to *you* for copies of present edition to extent of £440 with promise of ½ [half] future editions. Or you may make the same proposal to Longmans house—only Murrays could be done more readily through Blackwood. But I dont [sic] suppose Constable will quarrel with a work on which he has netted £612 in four months with a certainty of making it £1000 before the year is out. You will make him sensible the thing is serious for I cannot & will not want the money. I give you full power to treat with the others in case he shuffles. [...] [postscript] If Constable is restive he may lose the book entirely.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Walter Scott to John Ballantyne, 9 October 1814, National Library of Scotland, MS 863, fols 63-64; LSWS, I, pp. 463-64.



This letter clearly demonstrates Scott's deep involvement in the business side of the publishing industry. Here Scott is authorizing the Ballantyne brothers to seek more profitable arrangements for future editions of *Waverley* if Constable refuses to advance him £400. There are numerous similar examples of Scott taking control of the production of his novels.<sup>20</sup> In fact, even before *Waverley* was published, Scott was already part owner of both a publishing firm and a printing house. He was clearly in control of his literary publications.

Scott recognizes his own publication success in his fiction. In the original introduction to his novel *The Betrothed*, he imagines various characters from his previous novels, 'various literary characters of eminence', meeting in a boardroom. The characters are in a heated debate as to whether or not to form a corporation for the purpose of more efficiently producing future *Waverley* novels. The characters are baffled at the thought that the reading public could believe that a single author could be responsible for such a vast collection as the *Waverley* novels:

It is, indeed, to me a mystery, how the sharp-sighted could suppose so huge a mass of sense and nonsense, jest and earnest, humorous and pathetic, good, bad, and indifferent, amounting to scores of volumes, could be the work of one hand.<sup>21</sup>

The characters themselves want to be credited with the creative process that developed the novels. Unable to agree, the author, the persona of Scott himself, interrupts the meeting and declares, as a true publicist would, that he is giving up writing novels and is going to focus his attention on writing a work on history, *The Life of Napoleon Bonaparte*. Scott is promoting his work of nonfiction in the introduction to his work of fiction.

Though the commercial success of Scott's poetry advantageously positioned him to negotiate publishing contracts for his later works, Poe was never so situated and had little control over the production of his own works. Though he often had difficulties in publishing his texts and his early poetry suffered poor sales, he attempted to write works

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<sup>20</sup> On a research visit to the Free Library of Philadelphia, I discovered a previously uncatalogued letter from Scott to Thomas Guthrie Wright concerning similar business transactions. I contacted Professor Millgate, and she obtained a copy of the letter and added it to the Millgate Union Catalogue of Walter Scott Correspondence at the National Library of Scotland, record number 9239. The letter is located at the Free Library of Philadelphia, Literary Manuscripts Collection, call number FLP.RBD.LITERARY.

<sup>21</sup> *EEWN*, xviii, p. 4.

that would appeal to a broad range of readers as well as be received positively by critics. One of the results of his efforts was perhaps his most popular work, *The Raven*. Few of Poe's singular works served to advance the career of the author more than this poem. There has been much controversy amongst Poe scholars as to exactly when and where the poem was written,<sup>22</sup> though many assume that Poe drafted the poem sometime in 1844, the same year he relocated from Philadelphia to New York with his wife Virginia. Unlike the majority of Poe's other poetry, early versions of *The Raven* have not surfaced, making it even more difficult to ascertain the dates of composition. Nonetheless, Poe's ostensible intention in writing *The Raven* was, according to Poe, to create a work that 'should suit at once the popular and the critical taste'. By Poe's account, *The Raven* was an innovative work that went well beyond the confines seen in the heavily British-influenced poetry found in his earlier publications:

Now, each of these lines, taken individually, has been employed before, and what originality the "Raven" has, is in their combination into stanza; nothing even remotely approaching this combination has ever been attempted. The effect of this originality of combination is aided by other unusual, and some altogether novel effects, arising from an extension of the application of the principles of rhyme and alliteration.<sup>23</sup>

Despite the popularity and critical acclaim the poem would soon realize, Poe still had difficulty finding a publisher for *The Raven*. He initially turned to *Graham's Magazine*, a monthly magazine in Philadelphia owned by his friend and former employer George Graham. However, Graham did not like the poem and refused to buy it, though he did give Poe \$15 as an act of kindness.<sup>24</sup> The poem first appeared in print in the February 1845 issue of the New York-based *American Review*, whose editor George Hooker Colton had paid Poe only \$10 for the poem. Poe had also sent copies to other periodicals, and within two months of the first printing in the *American Review* in February, *The Raven* had appeared in the *Evening Mirror*, the *New-York Daily Tribune*, *The Broadway Journal*, and the *Southern Literary Messenger*. Poe originally attributed *The Raven* to 'Quarles', as it was the policy in the *American Review* to publish

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<sup>22</sup> Mabbott discusses the various theories on the composition of *The Raven*. See Mabbott, I, pp. 357-59.

<sup>23</sup> Harrison, XIV, pp. 96, 204.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 360.

anonymously or with a pseudonym<sup>25</sup>, but the other periodicals properly attributed authorship to Poe.

Though Poe received little payment for the reprinting of his poem in these various publications, he did gain some notoriety, which afforded him new opportunities. For example, in the summer of 1845, the publishers Wiley and Putnam, the same firm that published the *American Review*, agreed to publish a collection of stories entitled *Tales by Edgar A. Poe*. They looked to take advantage of the publicity and popularity of *The Raven*, assuming the excitement about the poem would push sales of any work from Poe. In fact, sales of the book were good, and *Tales* is probably the most successful of all the books Poe published in his lifetime. Additionally, in November of that same year, Wiley and Putnam also published *The Raven and Other Poems*.

Besides the publishing opportunities that emerged from the success of *The Raven*, Poe also sought to take advantage of the popularity of his poem by writing an essay for *Graham's Magazine* in 1846 entitled 'The Philosophy of Composition', a literary manifesto of sorts in which he attempts to outline how he wrote *The Raven*. Even though newspapers and magazines across the country, and across the world, copied *The Raven*, Poe made minimal direct financial gain from the success of the work. In a letter written in May of 1845 to his friend Frederick Thomas, in the midst of the craze over *The Raven*, Poe says, 'I have made no money. I am as poor now as ever I was in my life—except in hope, which is by no means bankable'.<sup>26</sup> Poe shows despair even after the publication of one of his most successful works.

It is perhaps because of Poe's troubles with the publishing industry that he ridicules literary success. In a short story entitled "The Literary Life of Thingum Bob, Esq'., an extremely successful but aging writer looks back at his illustrious career. The narrator, Thingum, recounts that his father was a barber and while at the barbershop one day, Thingum heard a magazine editor recite a poem called 'Only Genuine Oil-of-Bob'. The poem had earned the author both fame and money, and Thingum decided that he wanted to become a great poet. In his first attempt to write a work worthy of publication, he plagiarized lines from Dante and Shakespeare, and put them in a single work, signed 'Oppodeldoc', and sent it to four different magazines. Along with the poem, he sent a note asking for 'speedy insertion and quick pay'. All four magazines severely criticized

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<sup>25</sup> Cullen B. Colton, 'George Hooker Colton and the Publication of "The Raven"', *American Literature*, 10.3 (1938), 319–30 (p. 324) <<https://doi.org/10.2307/2920541>> [accessed 2 January 2019].

<sup>26</sup> *LEAP*, I, p. 504.

the work and the author. Thingum's next attempt was to write something original, but finding it difficult, he managed only to write:

To pen an ode upon the Oil-of-Bob  
Is all sorts of a job.  
(Signed) SNOB<sup>27</sup>

One of the magazines published the short poem, and it received great critical reviews. However, the editor refused to pay Thingum for his work. Shortly after that, several other magazines puffed the poem and Thingum found himself famous and working as a reviewer for one of them. Thingum eventually found fame and fortune as the owner of all four of the magazines, but only after he created a complex network of criticisms that praised certain magazines while attacking others.

The publication of successful works from Scott and Poe tells much about their relationships with publishers and the industries in which they operated. These publishing histories also demonstrate the authors' desires to appeal to public and critical tastes, but so do the publication histories of their less successful works. It would be misleading to suggest that any of Scott's novels were failures, but they were certainly not all met with equal enthusiasm. For example, his seventeenth novel *Quentin Durward* (1823) was initially received comparatively poorly throughout Britain, even though it was rather popular in France and throughout other parts of Europe. Eventually, the novel did begin to gain more attention in Britain as well, but initially, sales were so poor that Scott had contemplated moving away from writing historical fiction in order to try his hand at a work on '*diablerie*'.<sup>28</sup> It was only the success the novel experienced in France that kept Scott writing novels. However, the fact that he contemplated once again straying from the novel, a format that had proven so successful to him in the past, further suggests the role the marketplace played in shaping the direction Scott took his works.

Scott began writing *Durward* towards the end of 1822, while he was still finishing *Pevekil of the Peak*. The novel was published in Edinburgh by Constable and in London by Hurst Robinson in May of 1823, a short four months following the publication of *Pevekil*. The title for the novel had been intentionally kept a secret because Scott and Constable had grown suspicious that some of *Pevekil* had been secreted to the United

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<sup>27</sup> Mabbott, III, p. 1132.

<sup>28</sup> Lockhart, v, p. 280.

States for pirate editions by someone in the Ballantyne organization, and they did not intend *Durward* to be exposed before they were completely ready to publish it.<sup>29</sup> Though critical reception of the novel was mostly favorable, sales were initially extremely poor. Constable suggested that Scott had saturated the market by writing too much too often:

[Hurst and Robinson] are not over lively at present regarding Quentin Durward—the sale of which—from what cause I am not aware—has certainly not been demanded lately, as might have been expected—& was the case with all its predecessors. I suspect the most worthy & most excellent Author is giving us the Works faster than the public want them.<sup>30</sup>

Poor sales of the novel led Scott to consider writing a different type of literature, suggesting in a letter to Ballantyne, ‘The Mouse who only trusts to one poor hole/ Can never be a Mouse of any soul’. A week later, Scott writes to Constable:

I am sorry to find our friend Q[ue]ntin. D[urward]. is somewhat frost-bit which I did not expect. If on consideration it is thought necessary to leave greater intermission betwixt thes[e] affairs which I think may be the result we must keep the mill going with something else.<sup>31</sup>

The ‘something else’ Scott proposed was ‘a work on popular superstitions, in the form of dialogue’.<sup>32</sup> However, the success of *Durward* in France, where the tale was set, and an increase in sales both at home and abroad kept Scott from pursuing the work, though years later he would publish a similarly themed work entitled *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* (1830).

The publication history of *Durward* clearly shows Scott’s cognizance of the marketplace, but it also reveals his willingness to alter his literary output in order to appeal to the reading public. Poor sales of his poetry pushed Scott into writing the romantic novel, and it was only the eventual success in the marketplace of *Durward* that kept him from moving away from the novel into an even different literary direction. It is, in fact, by tracing the material aspects of the history of Scott’s novels that we get a fuller understanding of his works. Scott had written his first three novels, *Waverley*, *Guy Mannering*, and *The Antiquary*, in rapid succession, within less than three years, all published by Constable in Edinburgh. The second and third novels were both credited to

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<sup>29</sup> In fact, *Peperil* had been shipped to the United States, but it was not stolen. Constable had forgotten that he had authorized London agent John Miller to deal with Mathew Carey in Philadelphia. The letter from Constable to Miller outlining this arrangement is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

<sup>30</sup> Archibald Constable to Robert Cadell, 7 June 1823, National Library of Scotland, MS 320, fol. 126.

<sup>31</sup> Sir Walter Scott to James Ballantyne, 12 June 1823, National Library of Scotland, MS 743, fols 106-07; LSWS, VIII, p. 17; Sir Walter Scott to Archibald Constable, 18 June 1823, National Library of Scotland, MS 743, fols 108-09.

<sup>32</sup> Lockhart, v, p. 280.

‘the author of Waverley’, and all three novels sold well. Scott liked *The Antiquary* best and was perhaps anxious about his ability to write a novel better than that one. For his next two novels, *The Black Dwarf* and *Old Mortality*, published together as *Tales of My Landlord*, First Series, Scott looked to John Murray in London and his partner in Scotland William Blackwood for publication. When Blackwood first read *The Black Dwarf*, he was extremely disappointed with the ending of the novel. He wrote a letter to the ‘anonymous’ author suggesting a different ending. Blackwood’s letter infuriated Scott. He writes to James Ballantyne:

Dear James,  
I have received Blackwood’s impudent letter. G—— d—— his soul!  
Tell him and his coadjutor that I belong to the Black Hussars of  
Literature, who neither give nor receive criticism. I’ll be cursed but  
this is the most impudent proposal that ever was made.

W.S.<sup>33</sup>

Yet when the First Series of *Tales of My Landlord* was published, the title page did not include ‘by the author of Waverley’. Instead, Jedediah Cleishbotham, Schoolmaster and parish-clerk of the fictional Scottish town of Gandercleugh supposedly collected the works. However, Jedediah did not write the tales; that responsibility fell to the late Peter Pattison. Jedediah insists:

the censure will deservedly fall, if at all due, upon the memory of Mr. Peter Pattison; whereas I must be justly entitled to the praise, when any is due’ because ‘The work is unto me as a child is to a parent; in the which child, if it proveth worthy, the parent hath honour and praise; but, if otherwise, the disgrace will deservedly attach to itself alone.’<sup>34</sup>

In the end, we must not hold Peter responsible either because he was only writing the stories that were told to him by the landlord of the Wallace Inn. Scott certainly did not intend to receive any criticism from this work, as he was, in fact, three times removed from responsibility for the novels. David McClay, Curator of the John Murray Archive at the National Library of Scotland, insists that ‘[Scott] was managing his own reputation through these different cloaks of anonymity. It’s one of the keys to understanding him and literature today but one which is often overlooked’.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Lockhart, IV, pp. 12, 22-23.

<sup>34</sup> *EEWN*, IVa, p. 8.

<sup>35</sup> George Mair, ‘Sir Walter Scott Wrote Bad Reviews to Boost Sales of His Own Novels’, *The Times* (London, 4 April 2016), Online edition <<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/sir-walter-scott-wrote-bad-reviews-to-boost-sales-of-his-own-novels-fv3db08xp>> [accessed 9 December 2016].

For Poe, the demands and expectations of publishers and readers helped shape his poetic style, but it was also these same demands that led to his only completed full-length novel, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*. Additionally, that novel's lack of success in the book market kept Poe from venturing into the realm of the novel again, save the planned yet uncompleted serial novel that was known as *The Journal of Julius Rodman*. Poe recognized that *Pym* was less than successful, and even described it as 'a very silly book'.<sup>36</sup> Much like the publication history of *Durward* demonstrates Scott's keen sense of the marketplace and his desire to appeal to critics as well as the general public, so too does *Pym* show similar characteristics in Poe.

Poe began writing *Pym* while he was in the employ of the *Southern Literary Messenger* in Richmond in 1836. He had previously been in the employ of the magazine in the summer of 1835 when he moved to Richmond and became the editor. While working for the *Southern Literary Messenger*, Poe wrote many literary reviews as well as poems and stories for the magazine. However, his position as editor was short lived. For reasons unknown, he left Richmond and the *Messenger* in September and returned to Baltimore, though some speculate that his departure may have been the result of T. W. White, founder of the *Messenger*, having fired him for drunkenness. When Poe returned to Baltimore from Richmond, he obtained a license to marry his 13-year-old cousin, Virginia Clemm,<sup>37</sup> and before the month was out, he had written to White pleading for his job back. White agreed, stipulating, 'it must be expressly understood by us that all engagements on my part would be dissolved, the moment you get drunk'.<sup>38</sup>

In early October of 1835, Poe returned to Richmond and his editorial job at the *Messenger* with both Virginia and her mother in tow. He continued writing for the magazine, while at the same time soliciting contributions from other writers. Poe soon became well known as a harsh literary critic, earning the moniker 'The Tomahawk Man', and subscriptions to the magazine began to grow. By the spring of 1836, he and Virginia were married, and he apparently managed to maintain his sobriety, at least for a time. Then, around August or September of 1836, Poe apparently began drinking again, and White gave him a one-month notice. However, for several reasons, White changed his mind, and Poe continued as editor. The growth of the *Messenger* under Poe's editorship

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<sup>36</sup> *LEAP*, I, p. 218.

<sup>37</sup> Mabbott indicates that there may have been a secret wedding at this point (Mabbott, I, p. 546).

<sup>38</sup> Thomas W. White to Edgar Allan Poe, September 29, 1835, The Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore, RCL-104.

and White's willingness to maintain Poe's employment, despite his drinking, are clear indicators that Poe was good at his job. He had increased subscriptions substantially.

While in the employ of the *Messenger*, Poe sought a publisher for his collection of short stories *Tales of the Folio Club*. Despite any notoriety he may have gained as a critic for or as an editor of the *Messenger*, however, both Carey & Lea and Harpers had declined to publish the collection. James Kirke Paulding, from whom Poe had asked for help in finding a publisher for *Folio Club*, responded, 'I think it would be worth your while, if other engagements permit, to undertake a Tale in a couple of volumes, for that is the magical number'.<sup>39</sup> Following Paulding's advice, Poe began earnestly working on *Pym*, though he initially decided to forego the two-volume format and instead agreed to publish it serially in the *Messenger*. Much like Scott, a combination of financial necessity and market demand inspired Poe to write a novel. Poe's move towards writing a novel is evidence of an immediate and in many ways a very sensitive reaction to the literary marketplace.

Poe remained in the employ of White and the *Messenger* for the entire year of 1836, but by the end of the year, White had had enough, and finally let Poe go in January 1837. Only two segments of *Arthur Gordon Pym* were to appear in the magazine, and both of those came after Poe's departure, the first installment in the January issue, the second in the February issue of 1837.

In February 1837, Poe moved his family to New York, where he planned on regular contributions to the New York *Review* providing an income. He also hoped to begin his own magazine there. Shortly after the move, however, the *Review* ceased publication, and Poe was unable to gain the necessary financial backing for his own magazine. The only income from this period was the small allowance Mrs. Clemm was receiving from boarders in their home. Harper's, meanwhile, had read the installments of *Pym* in the *Messenger* and decided to copyright the work, so Poe set out to finish the novel. Again, the move to convert the work from a serialized version to a multi-volume work, as Paulding had suggested, is further evidence of Poe's reaction to the vicissitudes of the literary marketplace.

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<sup>39</sup> James Kirke Paulding to Edgar Allan Poe, 17 March 1836, The Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore, RCL-128.



Harpers had planned to publish *Pym* in 1837, but they delayed the project until July 1838. The novel appeared in the ‘magical number’ two-volume set under the flimsy guise of an actual narrative from the adventurer Pym. The preface insists that the serialized version that appeared in the *Southern Literary Messenger* under Poe’s name was merely ‘*a garb of fiction*’.<sup>40</sup> Though critical reception was mixed, domestic sales were poor. William Burton reviewed the novel in *Burton’s Gentleman’s Magazine*, stating, ‘We regret to find Mr. Poe’s name in connexion [sic] with such a mass of ignorance and effrontery’.<sup>41</sup> Despite Poe’s attempts to appeal to the popular taste by writing an adventure novel, *Pym* was not extremely popular.

Besides writers whose literary directions were in many ways shaped by the publishing industry and book market, we also find in both Scott and Poe authors who were keenly aware of the intricacies of the publishing worlds in which they operated. Scott brilliantly navigated through a complex network of author, printer, publisher, editor, bookseller, and audience. Some of his commercial literary success must certainly be attributed to his keen understanding of the literary marketplace, an understanding that is further demonstrated in an early letter to his printer John Ballantyne concerning his second novel, *Guy Mannering*:

I will print it before it is sold to any one & then propose 1st. to C[onstable] & Longman 2d. to Murray & Blackwd. to take the whole at such a rate as will give them one half of the free profits—granting acceptances which upon an editn. of 3000 which we will be quite authorized to print will amount to an immediate command of £1500 to this W[averley] may also couple the condition that they would take £500 or £600 of old stock. I own I am not solicitous to deal with Constable alone—nor am I at all bound to offer him the new novel on any terms—but he knowing of the intention may expect to be treated with at least—although it is possible we may not deal. However if Murray & Blackwood were to come forwd. with any handsome proposal as to the stock or reg[iste]r I should certainly have no objection to James giving the proposed pledge on the part of the Author of W. for his next work.<sup>42</sup>

His intention here was to have Ballantyne actually print the novel (though Scott was at this time part owner of the printing company), then sell it to the publisher who would

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<sup>40</sup> Edgar Allan Poe, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1838), p. vi, (Hereafter cited as *Pym* (New York)).

<sup>41</sup> William Evans Burton, ‘Review of Poe’s “Narrative of A. G. Pym”’, *Burton’s Gentleman’s Magazine*, 3 (Sept. 1838), 210-211 (p. 211) <<http://www.eapoe.org/papers/misc1827/18380900.htm>> [accessed 15 April 2017].

<sup>42</sup> Sir Walter Scott to John Ballantyne, 17 October 1814, National Library of Scotland, MS 863, fols 67-68; LSWs, I, pp. 465–66.

offer the best deal. For Scott, the best deal was not limited to only the sales of *Guy Mannering*. He also intended to work unsold copies of *Waverley* into the deal as well as the sale of the financially suffering *Edinburgh Annual Register*, a periodical published by Ballantyne that he and Scott had been trying to sell. If he could get one of the publishers to agree to these terms, he suggests, they would not only have the rights to *Mannering* but also to his next novel as well. What we see in this early example is Scott taking control of both production and distribution of his works, cutting out the middleman.

Scott began his career as a poet and a translator of German poetry, but his *oeuvre* includes 27 *Waverley* novels, numerous collections of poetry, extended works on the lives of Napoleon, Swift, Dryden, and Seward, several works on the history of Scotland, countless literary reviews, dozens of articles and essays in periodicals, various editorial works, and even songs. His early original poetry witnessed record-breaking sales figures, yet the bulk of his later success came from the highly lucrative novels, with all 27 titles published between 1814 and 1831. At the time of publication in 1814, *Waverley* was the most successful novel ever printed in the English language. He was the first author to have used a literary agent. He at one point owned both a printing firm and a publishing house. He actively sought the most lucrative publishing deals. He maintained an active correspondence with agents, publishers, printers, sellers, and fans.

Scott had a profound understanding of the publishing industry in Britain in the early part of the nineteenth century, and even though *Pym* in many ways may be considered a failure for Poe, it still manages to demonstrate that he, much like Scott, understood how the publishing industry operated in his native country. Scott's early success and popularity opened publishing opportunities for him that would not be available to Poe. Scott could choose his publisher from a number of them that were vying for a portion of the profits from Scott's work, while Poe was met with rejection after rejection, and even some of his most successful works would hardly be successful on the scale of even the worst selling of Scott's novels. Scott wrote an enormous number of reviews and essays for periodicals, but his primary financial success came from the novels. During the first half of his career as a novelist, he employed a number of publishing firms, including Constable, Longman, Hurst, and Blackwood, but following the crash of 1826, Cadell would become the only publisher of his novels. While Poe published several books, tales, and collections of poetry, his primary financial income was from periodicals or

magazines, the ‘magazine prison-house’,<sup>43</sup> as he would term the industry. Even though he earned a meager income during the majority of his life, Poe was as familiar with the publishing industry in America as were any of his contemporaries. Throughout his career, he at various times worked as a proofreader, literary critic, essayist, and editor. He maintained a lively correspondence with other authors, editors, magazine and newspaper owners, publishers, other critics, and readers. He worked and lived in the major publishing centers in America: New York, Baltimore, Richmond, Boston, and Philadelphia.<sup>44</sup> Like Scott, Poe was extremely well versed in the intricacies of his publishing world, although it may also be argued that Poe’s perpetual poverty suggests that he was not quite as canny as his work experience may indicate. Nonetheless, he knew his way around the magazine industry of early nineteenth-century America.

Clearly, both Scott and Poe experienced relative success once they moved beyond the type of poetry found in their early publications. Obviously, for Scott, financial stability would be a measure of this success, but he also succeeded in helping to create a unique national character for Scotland while still supporting a Union:

It is difficult to steer betwixt the natural impulse of one's national feelings setting in one direction, and the prudent regard to the interests of the empire and its internal peace and quiet, recommending less vehement expression.<sup>45</sup>

Scott maintained this ideology even through his novels. In a letter to his friend Morritt, Scott explains one of his reasons for writing *Waverley*:

It was a very old attempt of mine to embody some traits of those characters and manners peculiar to Scotland, the last remnants of which vanished during my own youth, so that few or no traces now remain.<sup>46</sup>

If financial stability were a measure of success for Poe as well, it would be difficult to argue that he was successful at all. He spent the majority of his adult life in poverty,

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<sup>43</sup> Edgar Allan Poe, ‘Some Secrets of the Magazine Prison House’, *The Broadway Journal*, 1.7 (February 1845), 103–4 (p. 103).

<sup>44</sup> See Terrance Whalen, ‘Poe and the American Publishing Industry’, in *A Historical Guide to Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by J. Gerald Kennedy (Oxford: OUP, 2001), pp. 63–93. Whalen argues that it was Poe’s dire financial situation that led him ‘to new fields of literary labor’ (p. 63).

<sup>45</sup> *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott, from the Original Manuscript at Abbotsford*, ed. by David Douglas, 2 vols (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1891), I, p. 134.

<sup>46</sup> Sir Walter Scott to John Morritt, 9 July 1814, National Library of Scotland, MS 144, fols 62–64; *LSWS*, III, p. 457.

often struggling to house and feed himself, his wife, and her mother. Yet Poe had other ideas on how to measure his own success:

Literature is the most noble of professions. In fact, it is about the only one fit for a man. For my own part, there is no seducing me from the path. I shall be a *littérateur*, at least, all my life. [...] did it ever strike you that all which is really valuable to a man of letters — to a poet in especial — is absolutely unpurchaseable? Love, fame, the dominion of the intellect, the consciousness of power, the thrilling sense of beauty, the free air of Heaven, exercise of body & mind, with the physical and moral health which result — these and such as these are really all that a poet cares for.<sup>47</sup>

Of course, Poe may have been compensating for his poverty, but he makes it clear that fame and respect are amongst the keys to his success: ‘To be appreciated you must be *read*’.<sup>48</sup> We have already seen his ambition for fame and power even in his youth when he wrote ‘Tamerlane’.

Certainly, the levels of success of the works of Scott and Poe can be, and in fact have been, attributed to a number of different factors, but it should be remembered that Scott was also a brilliant publicist. We have already seen how he promoted *Napoleon* in the introduction to *The Betrothed*. Moreover, despite his insistence to Blackwood that he neither gives nor receives criticism, in 1816, he anonymously reviewed his own *Tales of My Landlord* for the ‘Quarterly Review’. Scott was caustic in his criticism of the work, claiming that in *The Black Dwarf* the narrative was ‘unusually artificial’, both the hero and the heroine were boring, and the ending was too abrupt.<sup>49</sup> Painting his own works in such a negative light may have been risky for Scott, but he had at least two very compelling reasons to write the review. The first was to respond to a criticism that appeared in the *Edinburgh Christian Instructor* by the Reverend Thomas M’Crie. M’Crie had criticized Scott’s unsympathetic portrayal of the Covenanters. The editor of the *Edinburgh Christian Instructor* had asked M’Crie to write the review quickly because he ‘long[s] to see the Covenanters rescued from his [Scott’s] paws’.<sup>50</sup> In many ways, Scott was more concerned about his reputation as an antiquarian than as a writer of fiction, and he used the review to present historical facts to demonstrate that his portrayal was accurate. The second reason Scott wrote the review was to boost sales of the novel.

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<sup>47</sup> *LEAP*, II, p. 770.

<sup>48</sup> *LEAP*, I, p. 85.

<sup>49</sup> William Gifford and others, ‘Art. VIII. Tales of My Landlord’, *The Quarterly Review*, 16 (1817), 430–80 (p. 445).

<sup>50</sup> Thomas M’Crie, *Life of Thomas M’Crie* (Edinburgh: John Johnstone, 1840), p. 221.

He accomplished this goal from two fronts. First was to confuse his audience as to the actual author of the novel. In a letter to John Murray that prefaces the review, Scott tells Murray that he is not the author of the present work, nor is he ‘the Author of Waverley’, and he has no idea who is. Scott, knowing that many people do not believe him, writes to Murray:

I have a mode of convincing you that I am perfectly serious in my denial [of being the author of *Tales of My Landlord*], pretty similar to that by which Solomon distinguished the fictitious from the real mother, & that is, by reviewing the work.<sup>51</sup>

Surely, one would not review one’s own works. Such is Scott’s ‘proof’ that he is not the author of *Tales*. Even though Scott presented *Tales* to the public as a collection gathered by Jedediah Cleishbotham, he continues the charade by beginning his review insisting that Cleishbotham and the Author of Waverley are one and the same. Still unsatisfied that he has properly duped his audience and hidden his identity, he also insinuates that the Author of Waverley was actually his very own brother Thomas, who was at the time in Canada. Of course, Scott saw this anonymity as an important aspect of the success of his novels. He writes, ‘We can however conceive many reasons for a writer observing this sort of mystery not to mention that it has certainly had its effect in keeping up the interest which his works have excited’.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, Scott has created a web of smoke and mirrors to hide his identity as the ‘Author of Waverley’ and as the author of *Tales*. As even further proof that he is not the author, Scott writes a *negative* review of his own work.

Poe, however, took a different approach when he anonymously reviewed his own *Tales by Edgar Allan Poe* for the *Aristidean* in October of 1845. Instead of criticizing the work in order to attract attention, Poe praised the tales. The article begins by defending Poe’s unusual style as ‘original’, then states that the volume has both sold well and received praise ‘on both sides of the Atlantic’. The review concludes, ‘Thus it is that he has produced works of the most notable character, and elevated the mere "tale," in this

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<sup>51</sup> Sir Walter Scott, ‘Transcript of Sir Walter Scott’s Review of His Own Work “Tales of My Landlord”, 1816’, *The National Library of Scotland, The John Murray Archive*, p. 1  
<<http://digital.nls.uk/jma/gallery/title.cfm?id=13&mode=transcript>> [accessed 22 December 2016].

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

country, over the larger "novel"--conventionally so termed'.<sup>53</sup> Of course, there is no way to determine if Poe puffing his own works increased sales or not, but the work was not a huge seller.

Even though Scott and Poe may measure success differently, they both entered the world of publishing along similar paths. They also share in their attempts to appeal to a broad range of readers while at the same time pleasing the critic. I will return to these ideas in later chapters, but for now, I want to explore how these two prolific writers managed their publications abroad and how ideas and concerns traveled across the Atlantic.

### **Publishing Abroad: Transatlantic Transmission and Reception**

Having explored how Scott and Poe managed the publishing industries and book markets in their native countries and how the demands of publishers, readers, and editors helped to shape the direction of their literature in the previous section, this section looks to explore how they managed publications of their works abroad. Although the works of both Scott and Poe were translated into many foreign languages even during their own lifetimes, the focus here will be on Scott's works that were published in America and Poe's texts that appeared in Great Britain. Such an exploration hopes to gain some insight into how these authors managed, or failed to manage, the dissemination of their works across the Atlantic and how the lack of international copyright laws contributed to the book industry, particularly in America. We see a shared network of publishers, printers, readers, critics, and other authors. Additionally, examining the American publications of Scott and the British publications of Poe helps us to understand some of the ways transatlantic culture expanded during the early nineteenth century, one of the ways in which ideas and concerns were shared across the Atlantic. Scott's novels, for example, did more in America than merely provide cheap entertainment for eager audiences. They transmitted ideas, social anxieties, and political concerns. Many of these ideas took root in the young United States, particularly in the American South. So important and influential were Scott's works in that region of the country that Mark

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<sup>53</sup> Edgar Allan Poe, 'Review of E. A. Poe's *Tales*', *Aristidean* (October 1845), pp. 316-319 <<http://eapoe.org/works/criticism/ara45pe1.htm>> [accessed 15 April 2017]. Though it is certain that Poe had some input into this review, it is uncertain exactly how much. The article is attributed to Thomas Dunn English, who was the editor of the *Aristidean* at the time, though Poe may have simply attributed the work to someone else so he would not be seen reviewing his own work. G. R. Thompson says Poe 'almost certainly' wrote the review himself.

Twain would years later famously blame the ‘Sir Walter disease’ for the American Civil War.

It was Sir Walter that made every gentleman in the South a Major or a Colonel, or a General or a Judge, before the war; and it was he, also, that made these gentlemen value these bogus decorations. For it was he that created rank and caste down there, and also reverence for rank and caste, and pride and pleasure in them. Enough is laid on slavery, without fathering upon it these creations and contributions of Sir Walter.

For Twain, Scott was an ‘enchanter’ who led southerners astray:

Sir Walter had so large a hand in making Southern character, as it existed before the war, that he is in great measure responsible for the war. It seems a little harsh toward a dead man to say that we never should have had any war but for Sir Walter; and yet something of a plausible argument, might, perhaps, be made in support of that wild proposition. The Southerner of the American Revolution owned slaves; so did the Southerner of the Civil War; but the former resembles the latter as an Englishman resembles a Frenchman. The change of character can be traced rather more easily to Sir Walter’s influence than to that of any other thing or person.<sup>54</sup>

Twain’s comments concerning Scott’s novels are remarkable. One wonders if any literary figure throughout history has had such an enormous impact in a foreign country, especially in a foreign country that was in many ways still trying to distance itself from its British roots and trying to create a unique identity for itself. Twain’s comments underscore the power of the rapidly growing transatlantic cultural exchange, suggesting that a Scottish romantic novel of fiction, written half a world away, could have such a profound effect on the culture and idealism of an entire nation.

Scott’s works, especially his novels, were indeed demonstrably influential in America, but the exchange of ideas was in many ways a one-way street.<sup>55</sup> American works of literature were generally received poorly by British critics, and American literature made much less of an impact in Britain than British works did in America. This was a fact on which Poe frequently commented. Although Poe may have made less of an impact in Great Britain than Scott did in America, publishers, printers, and booksellers widely circulated his works there, and he may have had more of an influence on the

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<sup>54</sup> Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi*, Harper and Brothers edn (New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1917), pp. 375–76.

<sup>55</sup> For a more detailed exploration into Scott’s influence on American Novels, see Fiona Robertson, ‘Walter Scott and the American Historical Novel’, in *American Novels to 1870*, The Oxford History of the Novel in English, Volume 5. Ed. J. Gerald Kennedy and Leland S. Person (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) pp. 107–123.

reading public in Great Britain than did many of his American contemporaries. Elizabeth Barrett (Browning) wrote to Poe in April of 1846:

Your “Raven” has produced a sensation, a “fit horror”, here in England. Some of my friends are taken by the fear of it and some by the music. I hear of persons haunted by the “Nevermore”, and one acquaintance of mine who has the misfortune of possessing a “bust of Pallas” never can bear to look at it in the twilight.<sup>56</sup>

Of course, this seems a somewhat trivial and rather isolated example of British admiration for American literature when compared to Scott’s reception in America.

Additionally, Barrett had likely read *The Raven* in a pirated copy.<sup>57</sup>

Poe’s works appeared frequently in British periodicals. Besides several firms publishing and distributing his texts, there were also a large number of reviews of his works in a diverse range of magazines and periodicals. A number of British periodicals, for example, reviewed Poe’s *Pym*, including the *Metropolitan Magazine*, the *New Monthly Magazine*, the *Monthly Review*, the *Spectator*, the *Atlas*, the *Court Gazette*, the *Naval and Military Gazette*, the *Era*, *Franklin’s Miscellany*, the *London Free Press and Literary Times*, the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, and the *Torch*. Many of these reviews were positive. Likewise, his *Tales* was also either reviewed or noticed in a broad range of British periodicals, including *Blackwood’s*.<sup>58</sup> It is a tired cliché that suggests British audiences only became familiarized with Poe through the French. There is no doubt that poets such as Charles Baudelaire, Stéphane Mallarmé, and other French Symbolists saw Poe as a literary genius, but British audiences were well familiar with Poe long before the French idolized his works, even if much of their exposure to Poe was through pirated copies of his texts.

Even though works from Poe and other American writers were frequently pirated in Britain, it was nowhere near the scale of the pirating of British works in America.

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<sup>56</sup> Elizabeth Barrett to E. A. Poe, April 1846, The Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore, RCL-630.

<sup>57</sup> Douglas Lind discovered a previously unknown pirated copy of Poe’s poem *The Raven* in the 1 May 1846 issue of *World of Fashion: Monthly Magazine of the Courts of London and Paris, Fashions and Literature, Music, Fine Arts, the Opera and Theatres*. Lind convincingly argues that it is likely this printing that Elizabeth Barrett had seen when she wrote to Poe praising the work. See Douglas Lind, ‘An Early Unrecorded Variant of “The Raven”’, *Poe Studies*, 43 (2010), 85–90.

<sup>58</sup> Burton R. Pollin, ‘Poe’s Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym and the Contemporary Reviewers’, *Studies in American Fiction*, 2.1 (1974), 37–56 (p. 37); J. Don Vann, ‘Three More Contemporary Reviews of Pym’, *Poe Studies*, 9.2 (1976), 43–44; and Burton R. Pollin, ‘Poe Viewed and Reviewed: An Annotated Checklist of Contemporaneous Notices’, *Poe Studies*, 13.1 (1980), 17–28.



Reprinting the works from market-tested British authors in early nineteenth-century America was big business. Lack of copyright protection for foreign writers freed American publishers to reprint any foreign works without the need to compensate the writer of the material. Some, including Poe himself, saw the lack of international copyright laws as an impediment to the development of American letters. 'Literature is at a sad discount', he wrote in 1842, 'There is really nothing to be done in this way. Without an International Copy-Right law, American authors may as well cut their throats'.<sup>59</sup> Certainly, the difficulties Poe faced with the publication of his works helped to foster such an attitude. There was little motivation for publishers to pay American writers for their works when they could publish an already-popular British novel for little more than the cost of printing. Despite these issues, some have seen the lack of international copyright laws in America as an important part of the development of American literature. Meredith McGill, for example, notes there were opponents to international copyright laws in America even in the early nineteenth century, and she views their argument as a powerful one: 'manufacturing, and not literature, is America's true cultural product'.<sup>60</sup> Emily B. Todd goes even further, suggesting that Scott's novels helped create an 'American literary culture' by shaping the American publishing industry in the early nineteenth century, and that the massive reprinting and sales of Scott's novels in America meant that 'the Waverley novels effectively *were* American literature' (my emphasis).<sup>61</sup> Likewise, James Green notes, 'the American book-trade was changed forever by Sir Walter Scott'.<sup>62</sup>

Influential indeed were Scott's novels to the American book trade, but where does that leave Scott regarding remuneration? His complex publishing network proved exceedingly lucrative in Britain, but the state of the publishing industry in America presented a unique set of problems for Scott and his team. American publishers certainly had no obligation to pay Scott for his works, and his popularity meant that American publishers pirated his novels liberally. However, it is precisely because of his

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<sup>59</sup> *LEAP*, I, p. 356.

<sup>60</sup> Meredith L. McGill, *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting, 1834-1853* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), p. 95.

<sup>61</sup> Emily B. Todd, 'Establishing Routes for Fiction in the United States: Walter Scott's Novels and the Early Nineteenth-Century American Publishing Industry', *Book History*, 12.1 (2009), 100–128 (p. 104) <<https://doi.org/10.1353/bh.0.0016>> [accessed 2 January 2019].

<sup>62</sup> James N. Green, 'The Rise of Book Publishing', in *A History of the Book in America, Volume 2. An Extensive Republic: Print, Culture, and Society in the New Nation, 1790-1840*, ed. by Robert A. Gross and Mary Kelley (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2001), pp. 75–127 (p. 123).

unprecedented popularity in America that he and his British publishers found a unique opportunity to cash in on sales in the American market, as I will soon show. Scott's extraordinary success in the American book market shows just one of the reasons that issues such as intellectual property and copyright protection took on a more prominent position in the minds of American authors. These issues are discussed in more detail later in this chapter, but it does seem clear that Scott's novels helped to shape the American publishing industry in a variety of ways.

One of the major effects that Scott and the novels he wrote had on the publishing industry in America was the fact that the popularity of the novels helped to usher in a highly competitive reprint trade that would in many ways rewrite the rules for American publishers. However, the popularity of his works would also become a catalyst for ending this pirating frenzy. Scott and his Edinburgh publisher would eventually work a deal with Philadelphia publisher Mathew Carey that would allow copies of Scott's novels to ship to Philadelphia even before they saw publication in Edinburgh, and by appointing Carey as his authorized publisher in America, most other publishing houses found it too expensive to compete with them. This resulted in a new tactic in the American publishing business. In 1829, Carey printed an extra 2,500 copies of *Anne of Geierstein* on 'cheaper paper but without title pages'. Carey then sold these extra copies to other publishing houses, who in turn inserted their own title pages and claimed them as their own editions. As Kaser notes, 'So far as Scott's works were concerned, this kind of collaboration ended the great battle for reprint priority, and closed a hectic decade in the American book trade'.<sup>63</sup> Even though Scott and his novels can be blamed for instigating cutthroat competition amongst American publishers to pirate works from British authors, so too can he be held responsible for bringing it to an end.

Pirating foreign literary works was certainly not unique to American publishers. Adding to the woes of American authors who were competing with pirated British works was the freedom of British printers and publishers to reprint American texts without having to compensate the American writers. Although Poe made very little money from his writings in America, there exists no evidence that he made anything from European sales of his works. However, the publication history of his works in Great Britain shows that he was somewhat popular and influential there, as Barrett's earlier quotation

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<sup>63</sup> David Kaser, *Messrs. Carey & Lea of Philadelphia: A Study in His History of the Booktrade* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1957), p. 110.

concerning *The Raven* indicates. In an article written in 1900, W. P. Trent attests to Poe's popularity throughout Europe:

With the partial exception of Cooper, Poe is practically the only American since Franklin who has been accorded sincere and widespread homage in Europe for intellectual achievements other than scientific — who has, in other words, been recognized as one of the world's master writers. Irving, Longfellow, Hawthorne, and other American authors have indeed been cordially received by British readers; but this is not the same thing as breaking down the barriers of language and winning the applause of the whole civilized world.<sup>64</sup>

Of course, Trent's observations follow Poe's death by roughly fifty years. In Poe's own time, very few literary critics or readers viewed him as a literary visionary. However, even before *The Raven* was published, Poe's works had appeared in a variety of British periodicals, though they never proved popular enough or profitable enough for him to support an agent or a publisher across the Atlantic as did Scott. Scott's ability to cash in on the production of his works in America only came on the heels of the unprecedented success of his novels, though American publishers pirated his early poetry as well.

The first of Scott's works published in America was his poem *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, printed and sold by Hugh Maxwell in Philadelphia in 1805. Despite this early example, American publications and printings of Scott's works were scarce and sporadic until the arrival of his popular novels. Most copies of his early poetry that made their way to American readers shipped directly from London to ports across the American east coast, where various booksellers would distribute them throughout the country. However, American printers and publishers quickly learned that reprinting British works could be a lucrative enterprise, especially in the case of the extremely popular novels from Scott.

Scott's novels offer excellent examples of both how the American publishing industry was in many ways shaped by reprinting foreign works and one of the ways in which ideas and beliefs become transmitted across the Atlantic. *Waverley*, published in 1814 by Constable in Edinburgh, first saw publication in America the following year by several publishing houses, including the New York firm Van Winkle and Wiley, and two Boston firms, Wells & Lilly, and Bradford & Read. *Waverley* entered a US market that was relatively new to printing and publishing, a young American industry that was

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<sup>64</sup> W. P. Trent, 'Poe's Rank as a Writer', *East and West*, 1.10 (August 1900), 305–13 (p. 305) <<http://www.eapoe.org/papers/misc1900/19000800.htm#pg0305>> [accessed 1 May 2017].

facing a number of serious problems. One of the most daunting challenges these early printers faced was in determining how many books to print. Printing was expensive and producing too many copies of any certain work meant extra printing costs as well as devaluing the edition. Printing too few copies, however, could result in profit loss by not meeting demand for the work. There were also questions related to how to distribute the texts to a larger audience more efficiently. Without extending the marketplace, sales were limited to a local readership, which would adversely limit profit potential. Largely because of these issues, American printers began to rely on a code of honor that discouraged two publishers from printing the same book simultaneously, and instead encouraged publishers to order prints from each other. These publishers necessarily relied on each other to adhere to this unwritten code with a view to maximizing the profit margin.<sup>65</sup>

The publication history of Scott's second novel, *Guy Mannering* (1815), offers an example of this edict in practice. Two American publishers, Matthew Carey in Philadelphia and West and Richardson of Boston, simultaneously publicly announced the printing of the novel. West and Richardson wrote to Carey explaining that they were already printing the novel. Instead of continuing with the publication, Carey honored the code by ceasing his production and instead ordered copies from the competition, West and Richardson.<sup>66</sup> The next several years of publishing Scott's works in the US followed a similar vein, with a variety of publishers reprinting and selling Scott's writings in a chaotic and haphazard way, with monumental mistakes in printing and distribution. As Scott's fan base in America began to rise, demand for his works increased, and on the heels of the huge American call for the Waverley novels, American book publishers would soon abandon the unwritten code, and a new era of competitive and cutthroat book publishing would begin to thrive in the United States. Just three years following Carey's decision to cease printing *Guy Mannering* because another firm was already printing it, a comparable situation arose with *Tales of My Landlord*, Second Series. This time, Carey refused to back down, writing to Wiley and Co. in New York:

A report has reached us, that you are printing "Tales of My Landlord"  
2d series. The friendly intercourse that has prevailed between us &  
our uniform conduct towards you, forbid the belief of the

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<sup>65</sup> For a detailed analysis of the publishing industry in America, and specifically on Mathew Carey, see Earl L. Bradsher, *Mathew Carey: Editor, Author and Publisher- A Study in American Literary Development*, Columbia University Studies in English (New York: Columbia University Press, 1912).

<sup>66</sup> Todd, p. 119.

[aforementioned]. We feel confident, that far from printing it yourselves, you would discountenance & if in your power, prevent such an [action] as dishonourable on the part of any, [on] whom you have influence. We have received copies of nearly all the celebrated Novels & Poems, that have appeared here for a year back, generally before they were published, but unfortunately two, 3, 4, or 5 days after they were announced. Were we disposed to act [dishonorably], we might have been tempted to reprint some of them. But it never once entered into Our Minds.<sup>67</sup>

Carey's refusal to stop printing the novel shows that the immense popularity of Scott's novels in America and the potential profits that American publishers could make by reprinting his works were changing the publishing rules in America.

By 1817, Carey began to emerge as the preeminent American publisher of Walter Scott's works. Carey's firm began to employ more aggressive tactics in an attempt to gain early copies of not only Scott but also other British writers. As part of these aggressive tactics, Henry Carey, Mathew's son, wrote to Longman in London offering him 'two hundred fifty dollars per annum' for early copies of the works of several British authors, including both 'W. Scott' and the still anonymous 'Author of Waverley'. Longman and Constable obviously saw the advantage of this arrangement, assuring some profits from a market saturated with piracy and unbridled re-printings. In response to this offer, Longman sought the assistance of John Miller, who would eventually become Carey's London agent.<sup>68</sup> The first of Scott's novels to arrive in America before publication in Edinburgh was *Rob Roy*, which was shipped to Carey sometime in early December 1817, well before the December 30 publication of the novel in Edinburgh.

Though Carey benefited from the early copies of *Rob Roy*, Constable was still courting offers from a variety of American publishing houses for Scott's next novel, and Carey's firm would not be so fortunate this time. By the time *Tales of My Landlord*, Third Series came to print in 1819, the competition between American publishers was becoming even more aggressive. Constable writes to Hurst, Robinson, and Company:

The third volume of Tales of my Landlord we regret to say is not yet ready We have offers of £50 for an early Copy from 3 different quarters, and having so many expences attending business we really cannot afford to make your American agent a present of this work as we did of the last.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Mathew Carey to Messrs. Wiley and Co., 4 September 1818, Mathew Carey Letterbooks, Lea & Febiger Papers, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Quoted in Todd, p. 112.

<sup>68</sup> Bradsher, p. 79.

<sup>69</sup> Archibald Constable to Hurst, Robinson & Co., 23 Feb 1819, National Library of Scotland, MS 790, fol. 430.

Carey was not the first to publish *Tales of My Landlord*, Third Series in America, an honor that went to Charles Wiley and Company in New York. Besides Wiley, there were other new and significant American publishers, including Harper Brothers and Samuel Parker. Yet Carey was still counting on his private deal with Constable and Longman and counting on Miller to deliver early sheets of the works in order to maintain an advantage over his competitors. The firm also bought copies from Thomas Wardle, an American who lived in London and acted as an agent for a number of US publishers for many years. Additionally, Constable helped establish a new publishing firm based in London, Hurst, Robinson & Co., and had given them the responsibility of furnishing Carey with early copies of Scott's works.

By the time Constable published Volume One of *Peveril of the Peak* in Edinburgh in the winter of 1822, he was still making backdoor deals with Carey through the agent Miller. Writing to Miller concerning *Peveril*, Constable outlines the arrangement:

We [...] have no objections to enter into a treaty with you for Messrs. Carey & Son Philadelphia for the early copy of the new Work of the Author of Waverly [sic] (*Peveril of the Peak*) now at press. The terms are as follows you are to pay us Seventy five pounds for this preference, we are to have no risk, and engage neither directly or indirectly to send any copy to America.<sup>70</sup>

In another letter to Miller one week later, Constable echoes his intention to distance his firm from such backdoor deals; 'we beg that you will not mention this arrangement to anyone'.<sup>71</sup> One can find a certain irony in Constable's insistence that the deals he made with American publishers be kept quiet, as if it were perhaps in some way unethical that his firm might profit from the American sales of works for which they owned the copyright. However, Constable's concerns were more related to the fact that he had agreed to provide Miller with copies of *Peveril* a full fourteen days before the work was to be published in Edinburgh or London. He was rightfully concerned with how the British reading public might respond to Americans getting copies of Scott's works before they reached British readers. However, Constable's secret deals with American publishers were not to remain secret much longer. Late in 1822, a dispute concerning accusations that someone had stolen copies of *Peveril* from Ballantyne Printing and sold them to Carey led to the formalization of the deal between Constable and Carey to send

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<sup>70</sup> Archibald Constable to John Miller, 14 September 1822, National Library of Scotland, MS 791, fol. 612.

<sup>71</sup> Archibald Constable to John Miller, 21 September 1822, National Library of Scotland, MS 791, fol. 618.

early copies of Scott's work to America, and Constable no longer needed to keep it secret.

Just as American publishers were reprinting works from British writers without having to compensate them, so too were British publishers pirating American texts. Scott's popularity and success combined with the shrewd business practices of his publisher Constable meant they were able to make deals with American publishers, but Poe's works never achieved the popularity in England comparable to Scott's popularity in America. Though not as popular, Poe was published numerous times in England and was fairly well known. His lack of success meant he could afford no help abroad in protecting his interests. As a result, Poe had little recourse when the London branch of Wiley & Putnam published an unauthorized edition of *Pym* the same year that Harper Brothers published their authorized American version.

George Putnam had opened a branch office and bookstore in London in 1838, the first case of an American publisher staking ground in the United Kingdom. With offices in both New York and London, Putnam was able to offer American titles, such as *Pym*, for much less, and much quicker, than were British publishing houses. Despite the fact that the unauthorized Putnam edition from London made Poe no money, it did allow his name to gain some notoriety in Great Britain. However, not all of Poe's works published in England properly credited Poe as the author. Between July and December 1840, for example, the London-based magazine *Bentley's Miscellany* printed four of Poe's stories, but never credited Poe as the author, nor did they cite the source of the stories. In the July issue for 1840, *Bentley's* lifted Poe's short story 'Why the Little Frenchman Wears his Hand in a Sling' directly from *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*, and besides attributing no author, they changed the title to 'The Irish Gentleman and the Little Frenchman'.<sup>72</sup> They also printed the stories 'The Duc de L'Omelette' and 'The Visionary' in October and December of 1840, respectively, both taken directly from Poe's *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*, and neither crediting Poe as the author.

Perhaps one of the strangest transatlantic literary exchanges came in August of 1840 when *Bentley's* printed an unauthorized and unattributed version of Poe's 'The Fall of the House of Usher'. They had copied the story directly from the Philadelphia periodical *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*. The copy in *Burton's* was an authorized copy and correctly names Poe as the author. Roughly one month after the story appeared in

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<sup>72</sup> Mabbott, II, p. 463.

*Bentley's*, it appeared in the September issue of the *Boston Notion* (printed and distributed in August), but it was not the version that had appeared in the Philadelphia magazine. The *Notion* had in fact copied the work from the London periodical. Indeed, Poe's short story had arrived in Boston from Philadelphia via London and, like the London magazine from which it was copied, the *Boston Notion* also failed to acknowledge that Poe had written the story. In a strange twist, in the December 1839 issue of the *Notion*, Rufus Griswold, who at the time was the editor, had printed a review of Poe's *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*, where 'Usher' had also appeared. The reviewer there claimed that Poe's collection was 'below the average of newspaper trash [...], wild, unmeaning, pointless, aimless'.<sup>73</sup> In an article in *The Broadway Journal* dated August 30, 1845, Poe leaves no doubt that he was acutely aware of the circuitous route his short story took to Boston:

It is astonishing to see how a magazine article, like a traveller, spruces up after crossing the sea. We ourselves have had the honor of being pirated without mercy; but as we found our articles improved by the process (at least in the opinion of our countrymen), we said nothing, as a matter of course. We have written paper after paper which attracted no notice at all until it appeared as original in Bentley's "Miscellany" or the "Paris I Chad vari". The Boston "Notion" (edited by Rufus W. Griswold) once abused us very lustily for having written "The House of Usher". Not long afterwards Bentley published it anonymously, as original with itself; whereupon the "Notion", having forgotten that we wrote it, not only lauded it *ad nauseam*, but copied it *in toto*.<sup>74</sup>

This incident would fuel Poe's long war with the 'Frogpondians' of Boston, who largely either shunned or caustically criticized Poe and his works. As Poe humorously points out, the Boston literati criticized 'Usher' when they knew Poe had written it, but when it appeared anonymously in a British magazine, they viewed it much differently, praising it and copying into the *Notion*.

Despite the numerous printings of Poe's tales in the UK, his works were often printed without crediting him as the author, meaning not only that he lost out financially, but also that he gained no recognition. Nonetheless, in 1841 Wiley and Putnam's London operation printed a second edition of *Pym*, with a separate edition published by John Cunningham, also in London, later that same year. The need for the additional copies

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<sup>73</sup> This review appeared in the *Boston Notion* on 14 December 1839. Pollin reprints the review in Burton R. Pollin, 'Poe and the Boston Notion', *English Language Notes*, 8.1 (1970), 23–28.

<sup>74</sup> *The Collected Writings of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. by Burton R. Pollin, 5 vols (New York: The Gordian Press, 1986), III, p. 237 <<http://www.eapoe.org/works/pollin/brp3c000.htm>> [accessed 17 April 2017].



alludes to Poe's British popularity. Surprisingly, however, it would be over two years until any in the United Kingdom would publish Poe again, and even then, only sporadically. In 1844, his works appeared in both *The Foreign Quarterly Review* and *Chamber's Edinburgh Journal*.

A number of British magazines, newspapers, and periodicals published Poe's works in 1845 and 1846, with his stories and poems appearing in *Lloyd's Entertaining Journal*, *The Critic*, *The London Journal*, *Popular Record of Modern Science*, *Churton's Literary Register*, *The London Sunday Times*, *The London Morning Post*, the *London Literary Gazette*, and *Athenaeum*. Douglas Lind has recently discovered a variation of *The Raven* in the May 1846 issue of London's *World of Fashion*, which he convincingly argues is likely the copy that Elizabeth Barrett refers to in her praise of the poem quoted earlier.<sup>75</sup> Wiley and Putnam also bought the copyright for Poe's *Tales* and published a version from their London publishing offices in July. Additionally, 'The Gold Bug' appeared in pamphlet form in 1846 in London.

What is perhaps most striking about the list of British magazines and periodicals that printed Poe's works is the diversity of the audience to which his texts would have been available. It is unlikely that the *World of Fashion* and the *Popular Record of Modern Science*, for example, would have shared very many readers. Poe's works reached a significant number of readers throughout Great Britain, but it was certainly common for these magazine and newspaper editors to alter the text of a pirated work to fit their audience better. In fact, both Scott's and Poe's texts were often altered once they crossed the Atlantic.

For Scott's novels, the rush to beat out competitors by being the first to reprint the work and distribute it to an eager American audience sometimes resulted in inadvertent errors. Carey's 1822 publications of *The Pirate* and *The Fortunes of Nigel* provide glaring examples of the mistakes Carey made by rushing to publication. Scott had made last-minute changes to these works, but Carey already had copies and was in the process of printing them. As a result, Carey's edition of *The Pirate* was missing an entire chapter, while his *Fortunes of Nigel* omitted the preface. Many criticized Carey for both the mistakes in printing as well as for the methods his company had used in gaining early

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<sup>75</sup> Lind, pp. 85-90. Lind suggests the discrepancy in the date of Browning's letter appearing prior to May is easily explained by the common practice of periodicals releasing issues well prior to the date printed on the issue in order for the magazine not to appear out-of-date.

copies of Scott's works. Carey's publication of Scott's next novel, *Peveril of the Peak*, went off without incident and solidified relations between the Edinburgh and Philadelphia publishers despite Carey's blunders with the previous two novels and the accusations that Carey had circumvented Constable in gaining early copies of *Peveril*, though Carey later proved that these allegations were untrue.

The formal deal Constable and Carey had made in 1822 to receive sheets of Waverley novels before production in Edinburgh did not prevent problems with publishing. The following year, Carey published early copies of *Quentin Durward*, only to discover that Scott had once again made late changes to the manuscript, resulting in Carey's copy containing additional text, but Constable accepted responsibility for the errors. When Scott publicly admitted authorship of the Waverley novels in 1827, Carey's firm began to deal directly with Scott, bypassing his publisher. This arrangement continued until Scott's death in 1832.<sup>76</sup> In fact, following the Third Series of *Tales of My Landlord*, Carey's publishing company was the first in America to publish all of Scott's following novels, yet there were still occasional mistakes in printing.

One of the most notorious blunders in the American market came from Scott's last work, *Tales of My Landlord, Fourth Series*, which contained *Count Robert of Paris* and *Castle Dangerous*. As usual, Carey had managed to get early copies of *Count Robert* and published excerpts in the *National Gazette* in Philadelphia. However, in Edinburgh, difficulties delayed printing for five months, during which time copies of the Philadelphia paper had made their way to London, raising questions from British readers. Scott found the blunder humorous and ridiculed American publishers in his introduction to *Count Robert*.

Though the frequent mistakes found in American publications of Scott's novels were often the results of publishers rushing to print the works before their competition, British publishers had different reasons for altering Poe's works. The most obvious alterations involve the failure to acknowledge authorship to Poe, especially in his early stories, as we have seen. There was really no need for these periodicals to recognize that Poe was the author or to acknowledge that the texts were from America at all. There were other changes made to British editions of Poe's works as well, such as in the reprinting of his short story 'Mesmeric Revelation' in the November 29, 1845, issue of

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<sup>76</sup> Robert A. Gross and Mary Kelley, eds, *A History of the Book in America, Volume 2. Extensive Republic: Print, Culture, and Society in the New Nation, 1790-1840* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2010), p. 56.

the *London Popular Record of Modern Science*. The London paper changed the title of the story to ‘The Last Conversation of a Somnambule’. The story was also prefaced with a declaration that the editors believed the story to be a true account: ‘The following is an article communicated to the *Columbian Magazine*, a journal of respectability and influence in the United States, by Mr. Edgar A. Poe. It bears internal evidence of authenticity’. Poe heavily criticized the London paper for employing ‘internal evidence’ to support the veracity of the story, but he also criticized the *Morning Post* for disbelieving the story: ‘it doubted the thing merely because the thing was a “wonderful” thing, and had never yet been printed in a book’.<sup>77</sup> Some readers took Poe’s fictional story to be factual. Archibald Ramsay, a resident of Stonehaven, Scotland, sent Poe a letter asking if the story were indeed true, if the account was ‘genuine’.<sup>78</sup> In his response, Poe did not admit that the story came from his imagination but suggested that it is an actual account of events that he does not believe, ‘The article was generally copied in England and is now circulating in France. Some few persons believe it — but I do not — and don’t you’.<sup>79</sup> Of course, Poe was trying to thrill and horrify his audience by attempting to make his fiction appear real. I return to this idea in more detail later in a discussion of how Poe and Scott also use footnotes to make their Gothic fiction seem more believable.

The London paper’s alteration to Poe’s short story was not the only occasion when publishers or editors changed one of his works to make it appear as if it were a true account. The London branch of the American firm Wiley and Putnam also altered the British edition of *Pym* from the original novel. They chose to publish the work without the last paragraph, presumably because it was overly fantastic and too implausible for readers to take as fact. They also added a paragraph to the preface:

It will be seen by a note at the end of the volume, that Mr. Pym’s sudden death (of which we have no particulars) occurred while these sheets were passing through the press; and that the narrative consequently breaks off abruptly in its most important part. But the exciting interest of the story, and the intrinsic

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<sup>77</sup> Edgar Allan Poe, ‘Marginalia’ [Part XII], *Graham’s Magazine*, 32 (March 1848), 178–79 (p. 179), The Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore.

<sup>78</sup> Arch Ramsay to E. A. Poe, 30 November 1846, The Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore, RCL-658.

<sup>79</sup> *LEAP*, I, p. 610.

evidence of its truth and general accuracy, induce us to give it to the public as it is, without further comment. THE PUBLISHERS.<sup>80</sup>

Despite Putnam's later insistence that 'whole columns of these new "discoveries," including the hieroglyphics(!) found on the rocks, were copied by many of the English country papers as sober historical truth',<sup>81</sup> contemporary British reviews of *Pym* suggest few were fooled. Regardless, even if Poe was unable to satisfy public taste in America, British publishers had no problem with appropriating his works and altering them to meet the demands of a British reading public. The changes that British editors made to *Pym* are discussed in more detail in a later chapter.

Understanding the publication histories of Scott and Poe abroad helps one understand their works generally, but it also helps to explain why each of these authors poked fun at the publishing industries across the Atlantic. Scott, as I have already touched upon, ridiculed American publishers in the introduction to *Count Robert of Paris*. While Jedediah Cleishbotham and Peter Pattison's brother Paul were arranging the tales in order to make them 'fit for public perusal', they received word that an American firm had already published the tales. 'Peter Pattison's last labours', his brother says, 'shall now go down to posterity unscathed by the scalping-knife of alteration, in the hands of a false friend'.<sup>82</sup> Jedediah and Paul accuse each other of leaking the manuscripts to the American press, but their early publication had tarnished the memory of Peter Pattison. Scott amended the introduction to the novel only after a Philadelphia periodical had published excerpts of *Count Robert of Paris* well before the UK print appeared.

Poe likewise ridiculed British publishers, specifically the Scottish *Blackwood's Magazine*, in two short stories, 'How to Write a Blackwood Article' and 'A Decided Loss' (later known as 'Loss of Breath. A Tale a la Blackwood'). Prominent Edinburgh bookseller and publisher William Blackwood established *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in 1817, and the magazine quickly earned a reputation for printing sensational tales. In 'How to Write a Blackwood Article', the Signora Psyche Zenobia, also known

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<sup>80</sup> Edgar Allan Poe, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym, of Nantucket, North America* (London: Wiley and Putnam, 1838), p. iv.

<sup>81</sup> George P. Putnam, 'Leaves from a Publisher's Letter-Book', *Putnam's Monthly*, (October 1869), 467–74 (p. 470), The Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore.

<sup>82</sup> Sir Walter Scott, *Tales of My Landlord, Fourth and Last Series: Collected and Arranged by Jedediah Cleishbotham*, 4 vols (Edinburgh: Cadell; London: Whittaker, 1832), I, pp. xl-xli.

as Suky Snobbs, visits Mr. Blackwood to learn the proper procedures for writing an article worthy of *Blackwood's Magazine*. The advice Blackwood gives includes getting herself 'into such a scrape as no one ever got into before', a brush with death, and then writing about her experience. He additionally recommends:

If you know any big words this is your chance for them. Talk of the Ionic and Eleatic schools — of Archytas, Gorgias and Alcmaeon. Say something about objectivity and subjectivity. Be sure and abuse a man called Locke. Turn up your nose at things in general.<sup>83</sup>

In the 'The Predicament', which was a story originally attached to 'How to Write a Blackwood Article', Zenobia follows the advice of Blackwood, finding herself in a series of ridiculous moves that culminate in her beheading by the hands of a clock in a Gothic cathedral in Edinburgh.

From the alterations made to Poe's works in the United Kingdom and Scott's novels in America to the ridicule each author made of the others' publishing practices, it becomes clear that reading their works through the lens of the publishing industry is critical to interpreting their works. In many ways, the lack of sufficient copyright laws in both countries fostered an increase in the transatlantic transmission and reception of ideas and concerns. As texts became lucrative commodities and with unbridled reprinting on both sides of the Atlantic, issues relating to intellectual property and copyright became more relevant than ever.

### **Intellectual Property, Copyright, and the Courts**

As much as any of their contemporaries, Scott and Poe were both acutely aware of copyright laws as they pertained to their works. Of course, laws concerning copyright protection were not the only issues, as anxieties over intellectual property and the concept of who owned ideas were also becoming more relevant. There is perhaps no better place to explore these notions than through Scott and Poe, who each expressed concern about both copyright laws and the concept of intellectual property. For Scott, these concerns materialized in a lawsuit that he brought against his long-time publisher Archibald Constable following the financial collapse of 1826.

Prior to the financial crisis that nearly devastated Scott, the collaboration between Scott, his printer and partner Ballantyne, and his publisher Constable had been enjoying unprecedented success in the book market. They had all three earned substantial profits

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<sup>83</sup> Mabbott, II, p. 341.

from the Waverley novels as well as from various other publications. Such success led to unusual and risky relationships between the various parties involved. Constable, for example, had contracted and paid Scott around £10,000 for works he had not yet written, providing Scott with cash to continue his expansion of Abbotsford. Additionally, the presses of Ballantyne (by now owned wholly by Scott) and Constable's publishing house were tied together financially through a series of 'accommodation bills', whereby each company backed credit for the other. Constable was in a similar financial relationship with the London publishers Hurst, Robinson & Co. This was a hazardous situation that tied the fate of the three companies together, yet as long as the companies remained profitable, the unusual system of credit would continue to work. However, in December of 1825, the fragile financial network built by the three companies collapsed when Hurst, Robinson & Co. suffered huge losses in an attempt to corner the hops market. As a result, 1826 began with Scott, as the owner of Ballantyne & Co. Printers, in debt to the amount of over £120,000. Though he could have filed for bankruptcy or borrowed from any of the numerous friends who had offered to help, Scott instead decided to set up a trust deed that would pay off his creditors from the profits of his works. In a letter to his son-in-law J. G. Lockhart on January 20, Scott writes:

A very odd anonymous offer I had of L.30,000, which I rejected, as I did every other. Unless I die, I shall beat up against this foul weather. A penny I will not borrow from any one. Since my creditors are content to be patient, I have the means of righting them perfectly, and the confidence to employ them.<sup>84</sup>

Scott intended to write his way out of debt.

The financial crisis of 1826 left Scott not only in huge debt, but it also soured his relationship with Constable. Scott largely held Constable responsible for the financial disaster and treated him rather poorly after 1826. According to Lockhart, Scott felt as though Constable 'had acted in such a manner by him, especially in urging him to borrow large sums of money for his support after all chance of recovery was over, that he had more than forfeited all claims on his confidence'.<sup>85</sup> Yet Constable had on several occasions financially bailed out both Scott and the Ballantyne companies. He had never

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<sup>84</sup> Sir Walter Scott to John G. Lockhart, 20 January 1826, National Library of Scotland, MS 143, fols 3-4; *LSWS*, IX, p. 372.

<sup>85</sup> Lockhart, VI, pp. 224-25.

truly done anything underhanded or devious to Scott, yet Scott treated him quite cruelly. George Allan points out that following Constable's death, 'Scott neither attended the funeral, nor returned the slightest acknowledgment to the cards of intimation and invitation sent to him'.<sup>86</sup> Indeed, the legal battle between Scott and Constable following the financial crisis certainly did not help their relationship.

The court battle between Scott and Constable involved four topics. First were the manuscripts Scott was currently working on that Constable had already contracted and made partial payment for, *Napoleon* and *Woodstock*, as well as an 'unnamed novel'. The second was the work Constable was currently publishing, a collection of prose works. The third was the copyright to all the novels published to date, from *Waverley* to *Quentin Durward*. Finally, the actual manuscripts of the novels that Scott had gifted to Constable years earlier.

In late January of 1826, Scott met with Constable and told him that he considered the works he was currently writing, namely *Woodstock* and *The Life of Napoleon*, both of which Constable had contracted and advanced money for, were his own, and Constable had no claim to them. Constable refuted Scott's claims, leaving the decision to the court. In his journal entry for February 19, Scott writes:

For an unfinished work they must treat with the author. It is the old story of the varnish spread over the picture, which nothing but the artist's own hand could remove. A finished work might be seized under some legal pretence.<sup>87</sup>

As an unfinished work, *Woodstock* would remain Scott's intellectual property, but once finished, it would become a part of the lawsuit with Constable. Scott finished *Woodstock* in March, and it sold to Longmans for £6,500, though the profits were put into an escrow account until the courts could decide who would receive the profits: either Constable and his creditors or the trust deed that had been set up to repay Scott's creditors. Scott contested Constable's claims to ownership of the works on the grounds that Constable was unable to fulfill his part of the contract because he was bankrupt and could not pay Scott the rest of the money owed to him.

Had Scott left it incomplete, *Woodstock* would have remained a fragment of a work, an incomplete whole that Scott solely owned. Literary fragments and unfinished works appear often throughout Scott's novels, perhaps most obviously in his numerous

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<sup>86</sup> George Allan and William Weir, *Life of Sir Walter Scott: With Critical Notices of His Writings* (Philadelphia: Crissy, Waldie & Co., 1835), p. 376, n. 1.

<sup>87</sup> Scott, *Journal*, I, pp. 92–93, 127.

epigraphs, as I will discuss in great detail in a later chapter, but also throughout the narrative frameworks and the narratives themselves. In the introduction to *The Fortunes of Nigel*, for example, the imaginary Captain Clutterbuck asks ‘the Author of Waverley’ why he does not write anything designed for the theater. The author confesses that his poetic talent relies on fragments of old works:

It may pass for one good reason for not writing a play, that I cannot form a plot. But the truth is, that the idea adopted by too favourable judges, of my having some aptitude for that department of poetry, has been much founded on those scraps of old plays.<sup>88</sup>

Scraps of poetry, songs, and old ballads can be found throughout the Waverley novels.

Scott followed up *Woodstock* with *Chronicles of the Canongate*, published in October of 1827 in two volumes by Cadell and Company in Edinburgh and Cadell’s London team of Simpkin and Marshall. Scott did not intend to let Constable profit by claiming *Chronicles* to be the ‘unnamed’ novel alluded to in the lawsuit. Therefore, *Chronicles* consisted of two short stories, ‘The Highland Widow’ and ‘The Two Drovers’, and a novella, ‘The Surgeon’s Daughter’, and was published in a non-standard two-volume set. As novels were typically published in three volumes, Scott’s decision to present the work as a collection of short stories and to publish them in two volumes instead of three protected *Chronicles* from the lawsuit.

The legal battle would go on for years. In fact, the manuscripts in question were finally auctioned off in August of 1831. The courts eventually found in favor of Constable on all accounts except *Napoleon* and *Woodstock*, leaving Scott feeling ‘swindled out of [his] property’.<sup>89</sup> Regardless, Scott’s suit against Constable demonstrates Scott’s ideas of copyright and intellectual property, and the steps he was willing to take to protect his works. He had certainly learned how to profit from his works even when they were not protected by law in America. Poe was not as fortunate.

Poe’s position towards copyright and intellectual property is a bit more complicated than it initially seems. On the one hand, he felt as though the lack of international copyright laws in America was stifling American literature. The cheap reprinting of British texts meant publishers were less willing to risk capital on unproven American writers. On the other hand, however, Poe certainly had no problem with the pirating of his works in Europe, even though he made no money from these reprints. Poe was

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<sup>88</sup> *EEWN*, XIII, p. 11.

<sup>89</sup> Scott, *Journal*, II, p. 396.



unquestionably aware that British periodicals were pirating his works, yet he was far from being angry. When the *Evening Mirror* published Thomas Dunn English's attack on Poe in response to 'The Literati of New York City' (this is discussed in more detail later in this chapter), Poe asked the editor of the *Daily Reveille* in St. Louis to print an 'editorial' retort, a response Poe was kind enough to have already written:

A long and highly laudatory review of his Tales, written by *Martin Farquhar Tupper*, [. . .] appeared in a late number of "The London Literary Gazette". "The Athenaeum", "The British Critic[.]" "The Spectator", "The Popular Record"[.]" "Churton's Literary Register", and various other journals, scientific as well as literary, have united in approbation of Tales & Poems. "The Raven" is copied in full in the "British Critic" and "The Athenaeum". "The Times" — the matter of fact "*Times!*" — copies the "Valdemar Case". The world's greatest poetess, *Elizabeth Barrett Barrett*, says of Mr Poe: — "This *vivid* writing! — this power *which is felt!* 'The Raven' has produced a *sensation* — a 'fit horror' — here in England".<sup>90</sup>

Far from condemning the British magazines and newspapers that had pirated his works, Poe found validation in his British appearances. His concerns often seemed to place public opinion above monetary gain, and certainly, fame was on his mind as early as 'Tamerlane'. It comes as no surprise, then, that despite his continuous want for finances, the only suit Poe ever filed in a court of law had as much to do with public opinion as it did with copyright or intellectual property.

Poe was no stranger to wars of words, especially when they brought attention to him or to his works. His often-caustic critical reviews certainly attracted the attention for which he was always searching, but they also created for him many enemies. Just prior to his *The Broadway Journal* permanently closing, he wrote to Fitz-Greene Halleck, 'there is a deliberate attempt now being made to involve me in ruin'.<sup>91</sup> Poe had attacked a number of American literati, perhaps most famously in what Poe himself would term the 'Little Longfellow War', a well-known extended attack on Longfellow that largely centered on copyright issues and intellectual property. Beginning mid-January 1845, Poe launched a series of attacks aimed at Longfellow, accusing the prominent poet and professor of plagiarism. What makes Poe's accusations more interesting is that he did not accuse Longfellow of actually borrowing lines or direct quotations from the works of other poets, but he accused him of stealing *ideas*, of 'bare-faced and barbarous

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<sup>90</sup> *LEAP*, II, p. 580.

<sup>91</sup> *LEAP*, I, p. 542.

plagiarism belonging to that worst species of literary robbery, in which, while the words of the wronged author are avoided, his most intangible, and therefore his least defensible and least reclaimable property, is *purloined*”<sup>92</sup> This is clearly Poe defining intellectual property rights.

Longfellow never publicly responded to Poe’s attacks or his accusations of plagiarism, but an anonymous contributor to the New York *Evening Mirror* made a defense on his behalf under the pseudonym ‘Outis’, a Greek term meaning ‘Nobody’. Many scholars believe that ‘Outis’ was none other than Poe himself executing another of his hoaxes while drumming up publicity for *The Broadway Journal*.<sup>93</sup> ‘The Little Longfellow War’ may have received so much scholarly attention because of the canonical status of Longfellow and the intriguing controversy surrounding the identity of his anonymous defender. However, none of Poe’s literary feuds went as far as the one he was involved in with physician, poet, and politician Thomas Dunn English in 1846 and 1847. English had accused Poe of plagiarism, fraud, and forgery. In fact, English’s accusations led to the only lawsuit that Poe ever filed in court.

Poe and English met sometime in 1839 when Poe was acting as assistant editor of *Burton’s Gentleman’s Magazine*. They remained friends for years, until a dispute began in early 1846, shortly after Poe’s *The Broadway Journal* folded. The conflict between Poe and English began with a series of letters written to Poe by Elizabeth Ellet, a minor poet from New York who was vying for Poe’s attention. Fearing a scandal, Ellet asked her brother to retrieve the letters from Poe, who insisted that he had already returned them. Poe turned to English for help, asking to borrow a pistol because he feared Ellet’s brother would kill him. English ridiculed and insulted Poe by suggesting that the letters in question never actually existed, and a physical fight ensued.

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<sup>92</sup> Edgar Allan Poe, ‘Tennyson vs Longfellow’, *Alexander’s Weekly Messenger*, 12 February 1840, 2 (p. 2), The Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore.

<sup>93</sup> Several prominent Poe scholars, including Mabbott, Burton R. Pollin, and G. R. Thompson, have suggested that Poe was likely the author of the letters signed ‘Outis’. Killis Campbell finds it ‘extremely improbable’. See Killis Campbell, ‘Who Was “Outis”?’’, *Studies in English*, 8 (1928), 107–9 (p. 107). Ljungquist and Jones suggest that Outis was actually the editor of the New York *Rover* (Kent Ljungquist and Buford Jones, ‘The Identity of “Outis”’: A Further Chapter in the Poe-Longfellow War’, *American Literature*, 60.3 (1988), 402–15 (p. 404) <<https://doi.org/10.2307/2926957>> [accessed 2 January 2019]). The controversy continues, but is still a fascinating piece of literary history.

Shortly after his physical altercation with English, in May of 1846 Poe published a series of essays entitled ‘The Literati of New York City’ in *Godey’s Lady’s Book*. These articles were, in reality, more like a series of gossip columns on authors of his day. Poe employed this venue to exact a sort of revenge on English, first asserting that he did not personally know him, then describing English as a man ‘without the commonest school education busying himself in attempts to instruct mankind on topics of polite literature’ (English, in fact, had both a Medical Degree and a Law Degree). Poe goes on to suggest that English ‘has taken [...] most unwarrantable liberties, in the way of downright plagiarism, from a Philadelphian poet’.<sup>94</sup>

English responded to Poe’s strike at him in ‘Literati’ with a counter-attack in the *Evening Mirror*, in an article the editor calls ‘The War of the Literati’. In this response, which English simply titles ‘Mr. English’s Reply to Mr. Poe’, English accused Poe of obtaining money from him ‘under false pretenses’, forgery, drunkenness, fraud, and plagiarism. He also insisted that he had won the fistfight with Poe, and he publicized the scandal involving the letters of Elizabeth Ellet, though he did not mention the writer by name. English also says in his response that ‘[Poe’s] cool plagiarisms from known or forgotten writers, excite the public amazement’. He ends his diatribe of Poe by insisting, ‘He is not alone thoroughly unprincipled, base and depraved, but silly, vain and ignorant — not alone an assassin in morals, but a quack in literature’.<sup>95</sup>

The war was far from over for the two writers. Poe responded again in a long letter published in *The Spirit of the Times* in July simply titled ‘Mr. Poe’s Reply to Mr. English and Others’. Poe defended himself first by suggesting that it was he, not English, who was victorious in their physical fight, and he defended against the allegation that he owed English any money, insisting instead that it was English who owed him money. Poe also included in his response a letter he had received from Edward J. Thomas, the New York merchant who English claimed originally accused Poe of forgery. Thomas’s letter exonerated Poe of any guilt. Finally, Poe ended his response by berating Hiram Fuller,

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<sup>94</sup> Edgar Allan Poe, ‘The Literati of New York City.- No. III: Some Honest Opinions at Random Respecting Their Authorial Merits, with Occasional Words of Personality’, *Godey’s Lady Book*, 33 (July 1846), 13–19 (p. 18), The Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore.

<sup>95</sup> Thomas Dunn English, ‘A Card: Mr. English’s Reply to Mr. Poe’, *Evening Mirror*, 6.65 (New York, 23 June 1846), npn, The Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore.

editor of the *Evening Mirror*, and by threatening to sue English. Surprisingly, Poe barely mentions accusations of plagiarism:

He who accuses another of what all the world knows to be *especially* false, is merely rendering the accused a service by calling attention to the *converse* of the fact, and should never be helped out of his ridiculous position by any denial on the part of his enemy.<sup>96</sup>

English again replied in the *Evening Mirror* in July, daring Poe to initiate a lawsuit against him, insisting he would ‘make [his] charges good by the most ample and satisfactory evidence’.<sup>97</sup> Poe took English’s dare to heart, and on July 23, 1836, he filed a lawsuit in New York seeking damages of \$5,000 for libel against Fuller, the editor, and Clason, the owner, of the *Evening Mirror*. Through his attorney, Poe claimed that Fuller and Clason ‘wickedly and maliciously intend[ed] to injure [. . .] his good name, fame and credit’ by publishing ‘a certain false, scandalous, malicious and defamatory libel over the name of one Thomas Dunn English’. It remains unclear exactly why Poe sued Clason and Fuller instead of English. Certainly, at any point during the lengthy trial, Poe or his lawyer could have, and possibly should have, impleaded English, but they did not. It is also unclear why Poe did not include charges of plagiarism in the lawsuit. Specifically, Poe named defamatory remarks from English regarding fraud and forgery. The fraud charge involved \$30 that English had loaned Poe to purchase *The Broadway Journal*. According to English, Poe had promised him the magazine would be profitable, and it was not. The charge of forgery English claimed came from the merchant, Thomas.

When Poe’s attorney filed the lawsuit, English left New York and moved to Washington in an attempt to avoid criminal charges. English’s absence combined with the fact that the defendants were unable to produce any witnesses led to a delay in the trial. Eventually, the judge appointed a commission to travel to Washington to take a deposition from English. Though English had no proof that Poe owed him money or that Poe had committed forgery, he does say in his deposition that ‘the general character of said Poe is that of a notorious liar, a common drunkard, and of one utterly lost to all the obligations of honor’.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Edgar Allan Poe, ‘Mr. Poe’s Reply to Mr. English and Others’, *The Spirit of the Times*, (Philadelphia, 10 July 1846), npn, The Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore.

<sup>97</sup> English, ‘A Card’.

<sup>98</sup> Dwight Thomas and David K. Jackson, *The Poe Log: A Documentary Life of Edgar Allan Poe 1809-1849* (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1987), p. 689 <<http://www.eapoe.org/papers/misc1921/tplg00ca.htm>> [accessed 25 February 2016].

The trial finally took place in February of 1847, with neither English nor Poe present. Poe's lawyer did call as a witness Edward Thomas. Thomas testified that English had lied, and he denied having ever claimed that Poe was a forger. Poe won the lawsuit and received damages that amounted to \$225, plus a small amount to cover court costs. In a letter to Francis Osgood following the trial, Thomas writes:

You know the result of Poe's suit vs Fuller. It went as I thought it would for I always believed the article a *libel* in reality. [...] I got fifty cents as a witness for which sum I swore that Poe frequently "got drunk" and that was all I could afford to swear to for fifty cents.<sup>99</sup>

Even though Poe's suit against the *Mirror* was the only time Poe ever sued anyone in court, there were other occasions when he either threatened or contemplated legal action. In April of 1841, for example, in a letter to Joseph Snodgrass, Poe considers taking William Burton, owner of *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*, to court for spreading rumors that Poe was a drunk and neglected his duties when he was the editor of that magazine. Poe decided against a lawsuit, suggesting, 'If I sue, he sues; you see how it is'. Again, in a December 1846 letter to N. P. Willis, Poe threatens to take Willis and *The New York Express* to court for publishing an article claiming he was poor and in need of the necessities of life, complaining 'the concerns of my family are thus pitilessly thrust before the public'.<sup>100</sup> Poe also threatened to sue the *Philadelphia Saturday Evening Post* for accusing him of plagiarizing *The Conchologist's First Book*, but again, no suit was ever filed relating to this. Interestingly, there were lawsuits in France regarding the copyright and publishing of Poe's works, though none of these lawsuits involved Poe personally.

Much like Scott, Poe also mentions anxieties concerning fragmented works or unfinished texts in his fictions. 'The Fall of the House of Usher' provides an excellent example of where Poe's fragmented sources and intertextuality become prevalent. Poe inserts his own poem 'The Haunted Castle' into the story, but the narrator also reads several works to Roderick Usher, including texts from Machiavelli, Holberg, and other actual writers. However, Poe also creates an imaginary 'romantic' tale, 'The Mad Trist'. The tale is significant in the narrative; every time Ethelred (a name likely adopted from

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<sup>99</sup> Arthur Hobson Quinn, *Edgar Allan Poe: A Critical Biography* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., 1941), p. 505 <<http://www.eapoe.org/papers/misc1921/quinn00c.htm>> [accessed 15 October 2014]

<sup>100</sup> *LEAP*, I, pp. 263, 611.

Scott's *Ivanhoe*), the hero of the 'Trist', makes a noise in the text, the narrator and Roderick Usher hear a sound in the house. As the reader soon discovers, the noises they hear are the sounds of Madeline Usher escaping her entombment.

If Poe was trying to gain public favor and protect his reputation through the use of the court, his efforts in many ways backfired. The lawsuit, which Moss describes as 'Poe's major crisis',<sup>101</sup> became a source of negative publicity. The *Daily Tribune* took issue with the fact that Poe sued Fuller as opposed to English: '[Poe] did something equally mistaken and silly, if not equally wicked, in suing — not his self-roused castigator, but the harmless publisher, for a libel'.<sup>102</sup> An article in the *Spirit of the Times* ranted, 'We regret to see Mr. Poe bring libel suits against authors, for with all his consummate ability he is not himself apt to speak mincingly of other writers'.<sup>103</sup> Poe's position towards the case seems somewhat cavalier in a letter to G. W. Eveleth:

My suit against the *Mirror* was terminated by a verdict of \$225 in my favour. The costs and all will make them a bill of \$492. Pretty well — considering that there was *no* actual "damage" done to me.<sup>104</sup>

Poe initiated his lawsuit to clear his name of criminal charges and to answer accusations of fraud and plagiarism, while Scott's lawsuit against Constable sought to secure profits from his works, not for Scott himself, but for his creditors. Any winnings from Scott's legal battle were placed into a trust fund designed to repay his massive debt. Yet one thing that stands out amongst the two legal actions is the huge disparity of the material aspects of them. Scott's suit amounted to a monetary value worth tens of thousands of pounds. Poe, on the other hand, was seeking damages for \$5,000, though he won a mere \$225. What also stands out is the concept of intellectual property. Scott suggested that any unfinished work, any ideas he had not yet written down, were his own, regardless of what contracts were involved. Given Poe's accusations that Longfellow stole ideas from other poets, it seems as if Poe would agree. Both seem to adhere to the idea that unfinished works, fragments of the whole, are the sole property of the author, and such fragmented works surface throughout both Scott's and Poe's fictions.

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<sup>101</sup> Sidney Phil Moss, *Poe's Major Crisis: His Libel Suit and New York's Literary World* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1970).

<sup>102</sup> 'Genius and the Law of Libel', *New York Daily Tribune* (19 February 1847), p. 2.

<sup>103</sup> Thomas and Jackson, p. 690.

<sup>104</sup> *LEAP*, II, p. 626.

In tracing the domestic publication histories of Scott and Poe, it becomes clear that the demands of readers and publishers had much to do with shaping the literary output of these two early nineteenth-century writers, and that both writers were instrumental in shaping the publishing industry for the future. Scott and Poe were also uniquely positioned to gain a clear understanding of the intricacies of the publishing world. Scott had published several collections of poetry before *Waverley*, and besides his career as an author, he also owned both a publishing house and a printing operation. Poe was deeply involved in the magazine industry in America, holding several positions throughout his life as a proofreader, editor, and owner.

Scott enjoyed success early in his career by publishing collections of other authors' writings and transcribing works that had been passed down through an oral tradition. His original poetry also proved to be highly successful. With the growing popularity of Byron, however, Scott's poetry began to see declining sales, forcing him to seek other literary avenues, such as the historical novel and even the short story. Scott would write of Byron, 'He beat me out of the field in description of the stronger passions and in deep-seated knowledge of the human heart'.<sup>105</sup> Poe, although less successful commercially, also began his publishing career in poetry, modeling much of his early works after popular British poetry of the period. In Poe's America, book publishers were often hesitant to invest in publishing works from American authors when they could simply reprint popular British novels for much less. Partly because of this fact, the magazine and periodicals industry in the United States thrived. Poe began writing short stories to submit to magazines that were offering monetary awards for the best stories. He later attempted a novel that he had planned on publishing serially in yet another magazine for which he was working, though his firing from that periodical allowed him to publish the novel as a separate and complete work.

Scott's publication strategy had always been to try to publish his work in such a manner as to allow him and his publishers to split the profits, an arrangement he felt was equitable to both parties. Whenever possible, he retained the copyright to his works. In a letter to Southey, Scott writes:

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<sup>105</sup> 'Sir Walter Scott: Scott and Byron', in *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature: An Encyclopedia in Eighteen Volumes*, ed. by A. W. Ward and others, 18 vols (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1907), xii (para. 18) <<http://www.bartleby.com/222/0111.html>> [accessed 11 February 2016].

I hope you have not, and don't mean to part with the copyright. I do not think Wordsworth and you understand the book-selling animal well enough, and wish you would one day try my friend Constable, who would give any terms for a connexion with you.<sup>106</sup>

This was certainly not the case for Poe, who would have happily sold his copyrights if he were able to find a buyer. In fact, when Lea & Blanchard published *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* in 1839, the agreement was that all profits were to go to the publisher while Poe would keep the copyright. When Poe offered to sell the copyright back to them, they made it clear that they were not interested:

We have your note of today. The copyright of the Tales would be of no value to us; when we undertook their publication, it was solely to oblige you and not with any view to profit, and on this ground it was urged by you. We should not therefore be now called upon or expected to purchase the copyright when we have no expectation of realizing the Capital placed in the volumes. If the offer to publish was now before us we should certainly decline it, and would feel obliged if you knew and would urge some one to relieve us from the publication at cost, or even at a small abatement.<sup>107</sup>

Though Scott and Poe could be fairly confident that their texts would be at least somewhat protected from piracy in their own countries, copyright laws on both sides of the Atlantic were insufficient in protecting foreign writers. American publishers made no apologies for rushing to pirate British works, creating often-elaborate networks to ensure they were the first to place popular British texts in American bookstores. Likewise, British publishers and printers freely copied American texts without any authorization, having no responsibility either to pay the original author or even to attribute the work properly. It is also evident that both Scott and Poe were very aware that their works were being published and even pirated in this transatlantic exchange, but neither author was upset. Scott ridiculed the American publishing industry in his introduction to *Count Robert*, while Poe found validation in, and was quite proud of, his British appearances.

While the inefficiency of copyright laws meant a loss of revenue and, at least for Poe, a loss of publicity, it did create a route for the transatlantic exchange of ideas and concerns. Scott's novels, for example, made a significant impact on American readers, so much so that the works have been accused of fostering an ideology in the American South that led to civil war. Though Poe may have arguably made less of a material

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<sup>106</sup> Sir Walter Scott to Robert Southey, 1 Oct 1807, National Library of Scotland, MS 15971, fols 1-2; *LSWS*, I, p. 387.

<sup>107</sup> Lea and Blanchard to E. A. Poe, 20 November 1839, The Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore, RCL-220.



impact on the British public, it is clear that his works reached a wide variety of readers throughout the United Kingdom.

Poe's feud with English is significant in that it was largely played out in a public forum, first through a series of magazine attacks and counterattacks, and finally culminating in a public courtroom. Such a public dispute surely drew attention to the lack of sufficient laws to deal with such issues. It is also important to note that Poe did not sue English, the man who had written the article accusing Poe of plagiarism and fraud but instead chose to sue the owner of the magazine as well as the editor.

By examining the publication histories of Scott and Poe, it becomes evident how complex Darnton's communications circuit can become. Domestic publications of their works show the circuit can become rather tangled when we consider that Scott was sometimes not only the author of his works, but also the publisher, the printer, the reader, and, at least on one occasion, the reviewer. Likewise, Poe's position as a magazine editor or owner meant that he often held a unique position in the communications circuit as author and editor of his own productions, and occasionally a published critic of them. From a transatlantic perspective, we might question the position the author holds in the circuit if his works were published without proper attribution. In his stead, we might include pirate publishers, writers publishing under a pseudonym, unscrupulous agents or magazine editors, or any number of people involved in pirating texts. Tracing Poe's story that traveled from Philadelphia to London then to Boston, the network becomes huge, encompassing a broad range of people. Additionally, looking at the legal aspects of copyright protection and intellectual property, we would have to include lawyers, judges, witnesses, those who write laws, and anyone else who might be involved in such complicated proceedings.

It becomes clear that Darnton's circuit is wide-ranging. Certainly, books flow through these complex circuits, but as Darnton quickly points out, so do ideas. In fact, the purpose of studying the history of books is 'to understand how ideas were transmitted through texts'.<sup>108</sup> Indeed, we are led to believe Leslie Howsam's statement that the book 'is a *cultural transaction*- a relationship of communication and exchange that operates within a culture and a political economy'.<sup>109</sup> The first part of this chapter demonstrates that both Scott and Poe had an excellent understanding of the often confusing and

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<sup>108</sup> Darnton, p. 9.

<sup>109</sup> Howsam, p. 4.

volatile publishing industry. Examining publications abroad, it also becomes clear that these two authors shared a rather vast network of not only readers but also publishers, editors, and critics. Additionally, the legal battles that Scott and Poe faced show the importance they both placed on their works and on the ideas of intellectual property. From a material perspective, Scott and Poe share numerous characteristics.

As this chapter has also demonstrated, both Scott and Poe shared what one might consider to be a sense of insecurity about how both critics and readers would receive their works. For instance, they both published their works anonymously, separating themselves from the responsibility of authorship. They both felt the need to review their own works, Poe reviewing his anonymously, Scott reviewing the still anonymous ‘Author of Waverley’. As we have seen, their insecurities were largely based on critical responses to the genre in which they were writing, criticisms that often ridiculed or derided Gothic fiction. Yet both Scott and Poe had a strong desire for critics to accept their works as a serious art form, but also to be popular amongst the reading public. Poe admits as much, setting out to create a work that ‘should suit at once the popular and critical taste’. Likewise, when the commercial success of *Durward* was still in question, Scott was willing to alter the direction of his literary output to suit public taste. Additionally, the way each of these authors responded to the pirating of their works also underscores a desire for their literary creations to be popular amongst readers. Scott found humor in the pirating of his works, ridiculing the entire process in the Introduction to *Count Robert*. Poe, on the other hand, was proud that some found his works good enough to warrant unauthorized reprinting. Poe found validation in British pirating. But these authors also found other innovative ways to present Gothic fiction as a serious art form, at once validating the genre and appeasing public taste. One of the more imaginative ways they accomplished this idea was by using epigraphs and footnotes. In the following chapter, I will explore how these two authors use peritexts throughout their works of fiction to make their works not only more culturally relevant, but also more appealing to critics and more popular amongst the growing mass marketplace of a transatlantic audience.

## Chapter Two

### ‘Mottoes and Such-Like Decoraments’: Reading the Periphery

Sent off copy, proofs, etc. J.B. clamorous for a motto. It is foolish to encourage people to expect mottoes and such-like decoraments. You have no credit for success in finding them, and there is a disgrace in wanting them. It is like being in the habit of showing feats of strength, which you at length gain praise by accomplishing, while some shame occurs in failure.

Journal Entry<sup>1</sup>

When Sir Walter Scott penned this humorous anecdote in his journal entry for March 24, 1826, he was not only in the throes of publishing *Woodstock*, the twenty-second of his twenty-seven Waverley novels, but he was also reeling from the financial crisis that ruined his publisher and nearly ruined Scott himself. ‘The Author of Waverley’ was by then certainly no stranger to chapter mottoes. Though the first chapter epigraph he ever included in his fiction appears late in his first novel *Waverley*, he prefaced almost every following chapter of all 27 of the Waverley novels with an epigraph. Additionally, a separate epigraph accompanied each novel. These facts, coupled with his journal entry underscoring the importance of mottoes, undoubtedly speak to the popular culture and audience expectations at the time Scott was writing, yet they are also indicative of both the broad use of and the importance of the ‘undefined zone’<sup>2</sup> by writers of early nineteenth century Gothic fiction that this chapter seeks to explore. Indeed, mottoes and other areas outside of the main text seem to be especially significant at least up to the time Edgar Allan Poe was writing his macabre fiction. Examples of the elaborate use of the areas of the page that surround the ‘centre text’<sup>3</sup> can be found throughout the works of Gothic writers on both sides of the Atlantic in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, including long introductions, acknowledgements, prefaces, dedications, epigraphs, for both collections and chapters, footnotes, and endnotes. Common also are mysterious or anonymous author attributions, such as those found in Scott’s Waverley novels, Washington Irving’s *The Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.*, Nathaniel

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<sup>1</sup> Scott, *Journal*, II, pp. 161–62.

<sup>2</sup> Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin, Literature, Culture, Theory (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Alex Watson, *Romantic Marginality: Nation and Empire on the Borders of the Page* (London: Routledge, 2012), p. 10.

Hawthorne's *Fanshawe: A Tale*, and many others. Strange and often extremely long titles frequently accompanied by one or more subtitles are also common, such as Matthew 'Monk' Lewis's *The Isle of Devils: A Historic Tale, Founded on an Anecdote in the Annals of Portugal*, or, the much longer title of Edgar Allan Poe's only completed novel, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym. Of Nantucket*, which a full paragraph-length subtitle follows. Certainly, it also seems noteworthy that the 'mottomania'<sup>4</sup> of the early nineteenth century can be traced to the early works of Ann Radcliffe's and Monk Lewis's Gothic fictions.<sup>5</sup>

Epigraphs, introductions, footnotes, endnotes, titles, subtitles, prefaces, dedications, advertisements, and reviews are all part of what Gérard Genette has termed *paratext*. In Genette's formative study *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, the author groups paratexts into two distinct categories, 'epitext' and 'peritext', that together comprise the paratext completely. Epitext is made up of the 'distant elements' of a book, such as reviews of the work, interviews with the author or publisher, and advertisements. This category also includes private communications such as diaries or journals and correspondence. The latter category, peritext, is the focus of this chapter. Peritext includes all the text 'within the same volume'. This includes any text in the work that is not a direct part of the center text but is spatially located around the main work, such as epigraphs, footnotes, dedications, introductions, acknowledgments, and even title and author.<sup>6</sup>

Generally, I agree with Genette's separation of paratext into the subcategories of peritext and epitext. However, it is important to keep in mind that not all paratext fits neatly into one of these categories. For example, the criterion for categorizing paratext as epitext is 'purely spatial', which can create some confusion. In Poe's first edition of *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*, for instance, the second volume of the two-

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<sup>4</sup> Rainier Grutman, 'Quoting Europe: Mottomania in the Romantic Age', in *Time Refigured: Myths, Foundation Texts and Imagined Communities*, ed. by Martin Prochazka and Ondrej Pilny (Prague: Litteraria Pragensia, 2005), pp. 281-95.

<sup>5</sup> Edward Jacobs, 'Ann Radcliffe and Romantic Print Culture', in *Ann Radcliffe, Romanticism and the Gothic*, ed. Dale Townshend and Angela Wright (Cambridge: CUP, 2014), pp. 49-66. Also see John Claiborne Isbell, 'Romantic Novel and Verse Romance, 1750-1850: Is There a Romance Continuum?', in *Romantic Prose Fiction*, ed. Gerald Ernest Paul Gillespie, Manfred Engel, and Bernard Dieterle (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing, 2008), pp. 496-516.

<sup>6</sup> Genette, pp. 4-5.

volume set begins with advertisements categorized as ‘Personal Opinions’ and ‘Editorial Opinions’.<sup>7</sup> The spatial location of these advertisements, being within the volume, necessarily classifies them as peritext. However, Genette typically considers advertisements as epitext, and, in fact, the ‘Opinions’ with which Poe prefaces his collection are indeed epitext. They were written and circulated prior to their inclusion into Poe’s volume. In this case, the advertisements at the beginning of the second volume of *Tales* are both peritext and epitext. Despite the possibility of confusion in categorization, the discussion here is mostly limited to epigraphs and footnotes, both of which are easily identifiable as peritexts.

In the first full-length critical study of paratexts in the Romantic period, Alex Watson examines works from a variety of genres, including Gothic, to illustrate the relationships that exist between paratext and British political, national, and regional identities. Watson grounds his informative monograph on the assumption that Romantic period paratexts function similarly throughout various genres of that period. He resists ‘separating works in light of the genre of their “main” texts’, insisting instead that ‘annotation mark[s] a point of intersection between different genres’. Watson collates works from a wide range of generic literature, from ‘Gothic novels to cod- Augustan satires’, ‘both prose and poetry’. Though Watson’s assumptions may well be warranted in a discussion of how ‘the margins provide a site for examining the lives and cultures of economically, politically and socially marginalized peoples’,<sup>8</sup> there can be little doubt that these margins do much more. I will instead argue that some peritexts, specifically epigraphs and footnotes, operate in ways in Gothic fiction from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that they do not generally seem to operate in many other genres. Though these paratexts are not vital to the genre, they do become important tools that Scott, Poe, and other writers of Gothic fiction use to stage Gothic sensibilities of fear, uncertainty, confusion, and the effects of supernatural intrusion. Additionally, many of these writers employ certain peritexts to help position their Gothic fiction within a wider cultural tradition, as I will soon show. As such, peritexts also become interesting tools for modern scholars to explore the genre. This chapter will closely examine epigraphs and footnotes in Gothic fiction in order to understand some of the many ways they may operate in that literary genre and how these ‘undefined zones’ offer an

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<sup>7</sup> Edgar Allan Poe, *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*, 2 vols (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1840) I, pp. i–iii.

<sup>8</sup> Watson, *Romantic Marginality*, pp. 7–8.

interesting and often overlooked way of reading the Gothic fiction of Scott, Poe, and other writers.

Though Genette prefers the term peritext, Scott long ago described this type of text surrounding the main text as ‘decoraments’, indeed an interesting choice of words, yet strangely apposite for a writer of Gothic fiction. The Gothic architecture from which the literary genre is named represents a style of design that is fettered with ‘decoraments’: flying buttresses, pointed arches, gargoyles, ribbed vaults, spires, elaborate sculptures, and various sorts of ornate exaggerations. Every crack, every corner, every façade is embellished with decoration of some sort. So, too, do we find such embellishments in Gothic literature in the form of peritexts. At the very least, peritext seems to perform functions for literature that the lavish and often unusual embellishments similarly carry out in Gothic architecture. Peritexts provide a way of presenting, as Genette suggests, but more specific to Gothic fiction, it provides a way of presenting the extravagant and often bizarre interior with a beautiful exterior. This method of framing or bordering the text with peritext becomes an important characteristic of Gothic fiction. As I will demonstrate throughout this chapter, however, peritext is much more to Gothic fiction than mere ornament. Before examining these peritexts more closely, however, I first want to explore how both scholars and readers have received peritexts and to define some terms that I will use throughout this chapter.

For Genette, peritext is a term that refers to the ‘accompanying productions’ that both ‘surround’ and ‘extend’ a text.<sup>9</sup> As Scott’s journal entry suggests, these accompanying productions have historically had a strained relationship with the literature they accompany, and Scott was certainly not alone in rebuking annotations in literary works. Authors, as well as scholars and readers alike, have long questioned the use of certain peritext, with footnotes especially being at the center of these criticisms. William Hazlitt insists, ‘a beautiful thought is sure to be lost in an endless commentary upon it’.<sup>10</sup> Thomas de Quincey feels as though the presence of a footnote is merely the sign of poor writing, an indicator that the author is incapable of integrating a complete thought into his or her texts: ‘a note argues that the sentence to which it is attached has

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<sup>9</sup> Genette, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> William Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespear’s [Sic] Plays* (London: R. Hunter, 1817), p. 349.

not received the benefit of a full development for the conception involved'.<sup>11</sup> Critics have also viewed the footnote as a distraction from the text, an obstacle to a fluid reading of the works. According to Anthony Grafton, Noël Coward reputedly said that 'having to read footnotes resembles having to go downstairs to answer the door while in the midst of making love'.<sup>12</sup> Though the footnote seems to have sustained the brunt of criticism, other forms of peritext have also been censured. Epigraphic quotations especially have also received a fair amount of condemnation. Ralph Waldo Emerson, for instance, insists:

Quotation confesses inferiority. In opening a new book we often discover, from the unguarded devotion with which the writer gives his motto or text, all we have to expect from him. If Lord Bacon appears already in the preface, I go and read the Instauration instead of the new book.<sup>13</sup>

Of course, Emerson was not averse to epigraphs. In fact, he often prefaced his essays with epigraphs or mottoes, though he usually wrote these epigraphs himself.<sup>14</sup> American author John Neal, recounting writing his first novel *Keep Cool*, uses Scott's epigraphs to take a poke at America's fascination with British literature:

In writing this story, I had two objects in view: one was to discourage duelling and another was—I forget what. I only know that, inasmuch as it had become a settled fashion to head the chapters of a story with quotations, like those of Sir Walter Scott, which had seldom anything to do with the subject, I sat down and wrote several pages of dislocated and fantastic verses, which I handed to the printer, with general directions to divide the chapters, according to his own good pleasure, and to prefix the mottoes, without any regard to their applicability, hit or miss; all which he did; so that no wonder people could never quite satisfy themselves that I was not making fun of the reader.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey*, ed. by David Masson, 14 vols (Edinburgh: A. and C. Black, 1889), x, p. 165.

<sup>12</sup> Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 69–70. Chuck Zerby, in *The Devil's Details*, humorously notes, 'Grafton indicated that three other scholars have used the quip; it can be assumed that many more passed it along to their doctoral candidates who, scared and lonely as they often are, do not trust any footnote'. Chuck Zerby, *The Devil's Details: A History of Footnotes* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2007), p. 14. Also humorous is the fact that this current note is a footnote to a footnote that discusses a footnote about footnotes.

<sup>13</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Concord Edition, intro. by Edward Waldo Emerson, 12 vols (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1904), III, p. 13.

<sup>14</sup> Sandra Morris, 'Poetic Portals: Emerson's Essay Epigraphs', *Nineteenth-Century Prose*, 30.1–2 (2003), 300–328 (p. 301).

<sup>15</sup> John Neal, *Wandering Recollections of a Somewhat Busy Life: An Autobiography* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1869), p. 197.

Obviously, not all critics take such a dim view of footnotes and epigraphs. As the wide variety of research that has been written on peritexts attests, many scholars have realized the richness and insight that studying these peritexts can provide, and certainly, writers, editors, and publishers all continue to insert them into literary works, though arguably less frequently than in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Regardless of how one views footnotes and epigraphs, however, there can be no denying that they do have an impact on how the audience receives the text, and they serve a number of purposes. Genette suggests that the overarching function of paratext is to ‘*present* [the text], in the usual sense of this verb but also in the strongest sense: to *make present*, to ensure the texts presence in the world [...]. How would we read Joyce’s *Ulysses*’ Genette asks, ‘if it were not titled *Ulysses*?’<sup>16</sup>

Although *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* provides an excellent starting point for this current research, it is important to keep in mind that Genette’s study of paratext is part of a much larger project that focuses on identifying and defining various elements of paratext generally, across an extended period and inclusive of all literary genres. Early in his book, Genette notes that what he is attempting is ‘a general picture’<sup>17</sup> of paratexts. In applying some of his theories specifically to Gothic fiction, it becomes apparent that his arguments have both strengths and weaknesses. Certainly, I agree that classifying peritexts is useful in discussing the various roles they play in literary works, yet such typology needs to be flexible enough to account for the many examples that resist systematic classification. Genette’s infatuation with elaborate typologies and his apparent goal of precisely classifying paratext often lead to ambiguity and problems that seem to require much more attention. In his discussion of epigraphs, for instance, he categorizes their functions, though he finds only four, admitting ‘no doubt because I didn’t look for more’. Even the functions he does attempt to define are sometimes vague. Of the four major functions of the epigraph that Genette proposes, for example, only one has to do with the relationship between epigraph and text, and of this relationship, he simply states that the epigraph ‘indirectly specifies or emphasizes’ the text. Genette suggests that this is an ‘evasive’ function of the epigraph, especially those of the ‘romantic’ kind; that the epigraph is not meant to present a ‘philosophical opinion’, but it is meant to ‘heighten the reader’s feeling, his emotions’. Genette’s argument here is that

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<sup>16</sup> Genette, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 13.



most epigraphs of the ‘romantic’ kind are ‘more affective than intellectual, and sometimes more ornamental than affective’. This argument seems to simplify and generalize much more complicated relationships that exist specifically between epigraph and text found in late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Gothic fiction. Of course, Genette’s primary concern in *Paratexts* is with the relationship between paratext and reader, its ‘influence on the public’,<sup>18</sup> which is certainly important in the study of paratexts in Gothic fiction. However, when examining certain peritexts in Gothic fiction from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries more closely, it becomes clear that the relationships between peritext and text are equally important. It also becomes clear that the epigraphs in these works are much more than ornamental or affective, as I will demonstrate throughout this chapter.

Another point to consider when drawing on Genette’s study of literary works for this current research is that he focuses his discussion to the paratexts associated with novels, completely ignoring other formats such as magazines or newspapers. This current research applies theories relating to footnotes and epigraphs not only to novels but also to short stories, particularly, Poe’s short stories. Doing so is not without difficulties. Genette separates epitext and peritext based on spatial location, peritext occupying the space within the book or volume, and epitext outside, or at a distance. In order to identify the peritext of a short story that first saw publication in a magazine or a newspaper, for instance, the peritext, according to Genette’s definition, might include the entirety of the magazine or the newspaper, all the elements spatially located within the same ‘volume’, if indeed a magazine or newspaper could be defined as a volume. And it seems only fair to appreciate that a story that first saw publication in a magazine might be received by the audience differently than if it were published in, say, a collection of short stories in book form, or as a story inside the main works, such as ‘Wandering Willie’s Tale’ in Scott’s *Redgauntlet*. In the case of Poe’s short stories, however, the majority of what the newspaper or magazine contains is typically unrelated to the story being discussed, so I will limit the discussion here to the peritexts directly attached to the original story, regardless of where it was initially published. Doing so might be more difficult were this discussion to involve other forms of peritext, such as title, author, or page numbers, but the focus here is primarily on epigraphs and footnotes.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., pp. 157-58, 2.

Genette's affinity for classification translates into an intricate typology for paratexts, which allows him to discuss the history, placement, time, and function of each category. He then further subcategorizes each group of paratext. In his analysis on prefaces, for example, he creates an elaborate set of subcategories based on the author of the preface (the 'sender' of the paratextual 'message'), distinguishing a set of 'regimes' as either authentic, fictive, or apocryphal, and a set of roles as authorial, allographic, or actorial. Genette considers this 'cumbersome typology' to be necessary given the difficulty in determining the sender of the preface and the complexity the preface creates.<sup>19</sup> Because the author is discussing prefaces throughout a wide range of genres and periods, utilizing an enormous amount of works, this elaborate classification system does indeed aid in organizing his argument. However, as this current research focuses on only two categories of peritext and it is limited to a single genre, I have chosen to adopt a much less complicated taxonomy for the Gothic peritexts that I discuss here, a classification system based very roughly on Genette's elaborate system. Here, I will limit the classification to three rather broad, and admittedly often elusive categories: authentic, fictional, and apocryphal. I will categorize peritexts in this way based on evidence of clear authorial direction or the intentions of the editor or publisher as well as on the relationship that the peritext bears with the audience and the accompanying text in general. Of course, rooting out the intentions of the author or publisher and untangling complex relationships can be difficult and the resulting data ambiguous. Nonetheless, my rough classification system here is in no way meant to establish firm boundaries, nor is it intended to create a useful classification scheme outside of this current research. That task extends beyond the goals of this chapter. The classification system is employed here simply to allow for a general discussion of epigraphs and footnotes, to allow for a clearer understanding of how these peritexts function in Gothic fiction, and to aid in showing how and why the relationships between certain peritexts, texts, and audience develop and affect readers of Gothic fiction in the early nineteenth century.

As I will show, the categories I have chosen for the peritexts often overlap, and some of the peritext discussed can arguably fit into any or all of the categories. It is also important to understand that different audiences may perceive a peritext in different ways. Despite the limitations of the taxonomy adopted here, classification of these peritexts becomes a useful tool in discussing them. In addition to classifying peritext as

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 178.

authentic, fictional, or apocryphal, it also becomes helpful to adopt Genette's temporal classification system. This provides a simple way to distinguish between those peritexts that appear in the first edition or first printing of a work (original), those that publishers, printers, editors, or authors later add (delayed), and those that, for a variety of reasons, become omitted in later editions or printings of the work (deleted).

Though peritexts appear in a wide range of categories, I mostly limit the discussion here to epigraphs and footnotes, only briefly mentioning other forms. In doing so, this chapter omits or largely ignores valuable peritexts such as author, title, introductions, dedications, prefaces, and chapter headings. This omission is not meant to imply that these paratextual elements are unimportant or not worth further study. In fact, these paratexts often take on significant roles in Gothic fiction and represent a critical approach to the genre that has yet to be fully explored. However, given the limitations on space that restrict the peritexts that this chapter can meaningfully discuss, I have chosen peritexts that are at once important to Gothic fiction and deserve more attention.

Even though a number of well-qualified researchers have already explored and discussed peritexts, none of the existing research focuses on the role of peritext specifically in Gothic fiction. Besides Genette's work, and certainly partly because of his study, there has been a relatively recent upsurge of exceptional research conducted on the paratexts of individual works (Boudreau 2011, Kronshage 2014), individual authors, (Weinstein 1978, Chatsiou 2008, Dembeck 2006), American paratexts (Ratner 2011), British paratexts (Chatsiou 2009), paratexts in Medieval manuscripts and the Bible (Barney 1993, 2000), early modern writing (Tribble 1993, Slight 2001), and even the paratexts of the Romantic period (Magnuson 1988, Watson 2012). There has also been work published on the individual components of paratext, such as the footnote (Grafton 1997) and the epigraph (Grutman 2005). These works seek to extricate meaning from a wide variety of paratextual elements from a broad range of genres and time periods.

Some of these studies explore how paratexts can provide clues about the authors' personal lives. In Boudreau's *Sexing the Book: The Paratexts of Bram Stoker's Dracula*, for example, the author argues that, 'a paratextual analysis of *Dracula* [...] helps elucidate how every aspect of *Dracula* has been eroticized': the Dedication suggests homosexuality, the Preface 'reflect[s] the possible morbid sexual fantasies of the author', and the epitext (mainly personal letters the author had written after the novel was

published) provides ‘glimpses into an obscure sex life’<sup>20</sup>. Other studies consider the role of paratexts in fashioning the work itself. Kronshage, for example, suggests that the poetic epigraphs in George Eliot’s *Daniel Deronda* ‘turns out as an important literary technique by which Eliot achieves a high level of unity’<sup>21</sup>. Most of these studies, however, explore relationships between paratexts, readers, and the specific cultures of a nation and/ or era. Ratner, for instance, argues that American paratexts were ‘sites of aggressive courtship and manipulation of readers in early nineteenth century American literature’. He makes a convincing claim that in American literary works from the early 1800s, the margins of the texts were littered with ‘pedantic complaints about the literary marketplace, entreaties for purchases described as patriotic duty, and interpersonal spats couched in the language of selfless literary nationalism’<sup>22</sup>. Ratner’s study includes several American authors of the period but does not include Poe and largely avoids the Gothic genre altogether. Likewise, Tribble argues that in early modern English texts, ‘Reading the margin shows that the page can be seen as a territory of contestation’ where ‘issues of political, religious, social, and literary authority are fought’<sup>23</sup>. What most of these studies have in common, however, is that they all view paratexts as a tool that many authors employed to perform very specific functions.

This chapter builds on works such as those from Tribble and Ratner by examining the relationships between peritexts, author, and the reading public, also approaching paratexts as a tool. However, my study deviates by focusing specifically on peritexts found in early nineteenth century Gothic fiction from both sides of the Atlantic. Further, I argue that the underlying function of both footnotes and epigraphs was often much more pragmatic in Gothic fiction than for some other genres. However, before discussing some of the ways in which epigraphs and footnotes can operate in Gothic fiction and why such accouterments flourished in that genre during the initial stages of its development, it first becomes necessary to elaborate on the broad categories of peritext adopted for this brief survey: authentic, fictional, and apocryphal.

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<sup>20</sup> Brigitte Boudreau, ‘Sexing the Book: The Paratexts of Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*’, in *Journal of Dracula Studies* 13 (2011), 25-53.

<sup>21</sup> Eike Kronshage, ‘The Function of Poetic Epigraphs in George Eliot’s *Daniel Deronda*’, in *Connotations: A Journal for Critical Debate* 23.2 (2013/14), 230-60 (239).

<sup>22</sup> Joshua Kopperman Ratner, ‘American Paratexts: Experimentation and Anxiety in the Early United States’ (2011). Unpublished Dissertation. Publicly Accessible Penn Dissertations. <<http://repository.upenn.edu/edissertations/441>> [accessed 16 Oct 2018].

<sup>23</sup> Evelyn B. Tribble, *Margins and Marginality: The Printed Page in Early Modern England* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), p. 2.

### Authentic Peritext

In relation to epigraphs (or footnotes that quote or cite another work), authenticity simply means that the ascribed author and/or source of the epigraph is genuine. However, I do not want to confuse authenticity with accuracy in this sense. It is possible, and quite common, for an epigraph or a footnote to be authentic but inaccurate, as I will soon show. As an example of an authentic epigraph, I turn to Poe's original motto for his short story 'MS. Found in a Bottle':

A wet sheet and a flowing sea.  
CUNNINGHAM.<sup>24</sup>

Poe here accurately quotes and attributes a line from a popular song 'A Wet Sheet and a Flowing Sea' to Scottish-born (and friend to Walter Scott) Allan Cunningham, first published in 1825.<sup>25</sup> This epigraph is both authentic and accurate. This was the motto for Poe's short story when it first appeared in the *Baltimore Saturday Visiter* on October 19, 1833, and remained so for publication in *The Gift: A Christmas and New Year's Present for 1836* (1835) and the *Southern Literary Messenger* of December 1835. When Poe published *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* in 1840, however, he presented the tale with no epigraph whatsoever. 'MS. Found in a Bottle' next appeared in *The Broadway Journal* on October 11, 1845, with a different motto:

Qui n'a plus qu'un moment à vivre  
N'a plus rien à dissimuler. *Quinault — Atys.*

This, too, is an authentic and accurate epigraph, from Philippe Quinault's libretto to the opera *Atys*, I, vi, 15-16, written by Jean-Baptiste Lully in 1679. This motto is generally the one included in modern publications of Poe's works, and translates, 'He who has only a moment to live no longer has anything to dissemble'.<sup>26</sup> Although the quotation from Cunningham was eventually replaced (deleted), it remains authentic peritext in the early copies of 'MS. Found in a Bottle', even as Quinault's quotation does so in later texts (delayed).

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<sup>24</sup> Mabbott, II, p. 146.

<sup>25</sup> 'Robert Burns Country: The Burns Encyclopedia: Cunningham, Allan (1784 — 1842)' <<http://www.robertburns.org/encyclopedia/CunninghamAllan17841511842.253.shtml>> [accessed 25 April 2016].

<sup>26</sup> Mabbott, II, pp. 145-46.

Epigraphs can also be authentic and inaccurate. For instance, in Chapter 15 of Scott's *The Black Dwarf*, the following epigraph appears:

The darksome cave they enter, where they found  
The woful man, low sitting on the ground,  
Musing full sadly in his sullen mind.—*FAERY QUEEN* [sic].<sup>27</sup>

Scott attributes this quotation to *Faery Queen* [sic], the epic poem by Edmund Spenser. Perhaps the most obvious inaccuracy in Scott's epigraph is the misspelled title of Spenser's work, which is actually titled *The Faerie Queene*. Additionally, the original lines in Spenser's poem are 'the cursed man', not 'the woful man' as Scott has it. Of course, there is no way of knowing if Scott purposely altered the quotation or not. It is certainly possible that he did not want his audience to think that the hero of his novel, the Black Dwarf, was cursed. It is also possible that Scott was quoting the passage from memory, and 'woful' is how he remembered the passage. Nonetheless, this quotation is found in the source Scott cites, and, although slightly inaccurate, this epigraph is authentic.

Determining the authenticity of footnotes can often be more challenging than epigraphs because an epigraph, by definition, is a quotation placed at the beginning of a work. Authenticating the epigraph often involves tracing the origin of the quotation, although it may not always be so straightforward. Footnotes, on the other hand, can convey a broad range of information. Washington Irving, for instance, uses a footnote to cite a quotation that appears in the main text of *The Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.*:

\*From a poem on the death of the Princess Charlotte, by the  
Reverend Rann Kennedy, A. M.<sup>28</sup>

This footnote accurately references a poem that appears in the main text of Irving's work written by Rann Kennedy in 1817 entitled 'A Poem on the Death of the Princess Charlotte of Wales and Saxe Cobourg'. This is an authentic footnote that is also accurate, even though the quotation in the main text is inaccurate. The sixth line in Irving's quotation of the poem in *The Sketchbook* reads, 'This western isle hath long been famed

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<sup>27</sup> *EEWN*, IVa, p. 100.

<sup>28</sup> Washington Irving, *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (New York: C. S. Van Winkle, 1819), p. 137.

for scenes'.<sup>29</sup> However, in Kennedy's original version of the poem, the line quoted by Irving reads, 'Our Western Isle hath long been fam'd for scenes'.<sup>30</sup> Even though the poem that Irving quotes is inaccurately transcribed, the footnote is still authentic. Despite the fact that Irving altered the line from the poem in the main text of his narrative, it is evident that the source of that line is properly referenced in the footnote. Had the quoted line itself appeared in the footnote, we might consider the footnote to still be authentic but inaccurate.

Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer: A Tale* offers a similar illustration. An authentic footnote in Chapter 3 simply reads 'Vide Cutter of Coleman street'. The text that is footnoted is the one line, 'Colonel Harrison shall come out of the west, riding on a sky-coloured mule, which signifies instruction'.<sup>31</sup> Maturin quotes from Act III, Scene 12 of Abraham Cowley's adopted play *Cutter of Coleman-Street. A Comedy as it is Acted at Their Majesties Theatre-Royal: the scene, London in the year 1658*.<sup>32</sup> Early editions of this passage in Cowley's play have the line, 'Major General Harrison is to come in Green sleeves from the North upon a Sky-colour'd Mule, which signifies heavenly Instruction'.<sup>33</sup> Poor Harrison. At the hands of Maturin, he receives a demotion, loses his sleeves, apparently becomes lost, and no longer takes his instructions from heaven. Though there seems no apparent reason for Maturin to employ a quotation in this passage at all, later in this chapter I will explore some reasons why he did so and the ramifications of changes such as the ones he makes in this quotation. But again, the misquoted passage is in the main text, not the footnote, therefore we should consider the footnote authentic and accurate.

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<sup>29</sup> Irving, *Sketchbook*, p. 137.

<sup>30</sup> Rann Kennedy, *A Poem on the Death of Her Royal Highness, The Princess Charlotte of Wales and Saxe Cobourg* (London: the author, 1817), p. 19.

<sup>31</sup> Charles Robert Maturin, *Melmoth the Wanderer: A Tale*, 4 vols (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Co.; London: Hurst, Robinson, and Co., 1820), I, p. 118.

<sup>32</sup> The play was originally performed under the title 'The Guardian' in 1641. Cowley later revised the play as 'The Cutter of Coleman Street'. See Arthur H. Nethercot, 'Abraham Cowley as Dramatist', *The Review of English Studies*, os-4.13 (1928), 1–24 <<https://doi.org/10.1093/res/os-IV.13.1>> [accessed 2 January 2019].

<sup>33</sup> Abraham Cowley, *The Works of Mr. Abraham Cowley*, 9th ed. (London: Henry Herringman, 1700), p. 18.

Besides referencing passages in the main text, footnotes can also contain a quotation as well as identify the source of the quotation, such as the footnote in *Melmoth the Wanderer* that reads:

\*’A charm, a song, a murder, and a ghost’.  
*Prologue to Oedipus*.<sup>34</sup>

Unlike the earlier examples, here both the quoted line as well as the source appear in the footnote itself. The first step in classifying this footnote as authentic involves determining whether the passage does indeed appear in a work entitled *Oedipus*, but since Maturin fails to include the author of *Oedipus*, doing so becomes rather complicated. Maturin attributes this quotation to the ‘Prologue to Oedipus’, a vague attribution that serves a separate purpose, as, again, I shall revisit later in this chapter. Nonetheless, determining the authenticity of Maturin’s quotation requires a bit of legwork. Maturin could be referring to either of two works by Sophocles, *Oedipus the King* or *Oedipus at Colonus*, or to works of the same name by either Euripides or Seneca the Younger. Even Voltaire wrote a play entitled *Oedipus* that was first performed in 1718. Referring back to Maturin’s main text, the line, ‘In the galleries were the happy souls who waited for the fulfillment of Dryden’s promise in one of his prologues’ is attached to the footnote. Research leads to a play written in 1679 by John Dryden and Nathaniel Lee entitled *Oedipus: A Tragedy*. An examination of a 1679 published edition of Dryden and Lee’s play finds a slightly different version of the quotation given by Maturin:

Charm! Song! and Show! A Murder and a Ghost!<sup>35</sup>

This line, however, is not in the Prologue to *Oedipus* but instead appears in the Epilogue to the play. The quotation is both inaccurate and misattributed, at least technically speaking. However, it must be remembered that Dryden wrote the play and performed almost 150 years before Maturin’s novel was published. Numerous people had performed it and reprinted it hundreds of times. There is no way to be certain as to which edition or to which performance Maturin would have been familiar. There can be no way of knowing if he actually misquoted and misattributed the work, or if he had received the work in the same way as he quotes it. There does not seem to be evidence enough to categorize this footnote as fictional, nor can we consider it apocryphal. To reconcile such

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<sup>34</sup> Maturin, *Melmoth*, I, p. 97.

<sup>35</sup> John Dryden and Nathaniel Lee, *Oedipus: A Tragedy as It Is Acted at His Royal Highness the Duke’s Theatre* (London: R. Bentley and M. Magnes, 1679), Epilogue.



complications, situations such as this will tend towards categorizing the peritext as authentic, although inaccurate, unless there is unmistakable evidence otherwise.

Perhaps the most difficult footnotes to categorize as authentic are those that do not quote or cite other works but instead convey some other sort of information or message. Some footnotes may convey some ‘fact’ the author wants the audience to know, such as the following note found in *Pym*:

Whaling vessels are usually fitted with iron oil-tanks—why the Grampus was not I have never been able to ascertain.<sup>36</sup>

In this case, when the footnote in a work of fiction holds real-world information, authenticity and accuracy are synonymous. To consider this footnote to be authentic, one would have to research whaling ships from the early to mid-nineteenth century in order to find if they did typically use iron tanks to store oil. If that is indeed the case, then we can consider Poe’s statement to be authentic. Likewise, Scott frequently employs footnotes to explain the terms he uses in the main text. A footnote in Chapter 2 of *The Black Dwarf* explains what ‘gathering peat’ is:

The gathering peat is the piece of turf left to treasure up the secret seeds of fire, without any generous consumption of fuel; in a word, to keep the fire alive.<sup>37</sup>

Much like Poe’s note above, in order to determine the authenticity of Scott’s footnote, one would have to research gathering peat and determine if Scott’s description is accurate.

Footnotes and epigraphs can be challenging or even impossible to categorize as authentic. However, despite these difficulties, it is still helpful to employ a classification system, even if it is somewhat limited. When classifying peritext as authentic, it is important to keep in mind that authentic and accurate do not necessarily mean the same thing. This is particularly the case for epigraphs and footnotes that cite another source. With footnotes that convey real-world information, however, the authenticity relies on the accuracy of the statement. Even though some of the examples that I have shown above highlight some of the limitations of this classification system, the epigraphs and footnotes that I discuss later in more detail are not as difficult to classify.

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<sup>36</sup> Poe, *Pym* (New York), p. 63.

<sup>37</sup> *EEWN*, xxva, p. 164.

### Fictional Peritext

The category of fictional peritext includes all the peritext that was generally perceived by the audience or presented by the author, editor, or publisher as obviously untrue or false. This category can include a variety of peritexts, even titles, and is perhaps the most problematic of the three categories. Readers of fiction in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries certainly had some expectations about the literature they were going to read. However, audience expectations of peritext are much different from what they may expect from the text itself. To read an attributed epigraph or a footnote that defines a term or cites another source is to read outside of the fictional narrative of the center text. Bonnie Mac notes, ‘The paratext says, “The text is thus,” as if it were a statement of fact. Authorized by its own presence, the paratext is trusted because it exists’.<sup>38</sup> This inherent trust in peritext can make it difficult to identify peritexts that can properly be considered fictional, and such trust also provides the author with an opportunity to misdirect the reader. Occasionally, it may be helpful to turn to the epitexts, such as reviews of the work or letters the author wrote concerning a work, but reviews, advertisements, or letters rarely have direct reference to peritexts. More often, labeling peritext as fictional requires assumptions or even guesses as to how an audience would receive a certain work or the intentions of the author. One can only assume, for instance, that Poe did not intend for his audience to believe, nor, it is also assumed, did they believe that his short story ‘How to Write a Blackwood Article’ was meant as a list of instructions on how to get a story published in *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*. Poe’s title suggests that he intends what follows to be satirical, as he does with the epigraph with which he prefaces the story:

“In the name of the Prophet — figs!!”  
Cry of the Turkish fig-pedler.<sup>39</sup>

Even though this is an accurate and authentic epigraph quoted from *Rejected Addresses: or The New Theatrum Poetarum*,<sup>40</sup> it seemingly has no connection with Poe’s story.<sup>41</sup> *Rejected Addresses*, published in 1812, was a ‘well-known parodic collection’,<sup>42</sup> and many of Poe’s readers would likely have recognized the epigraph.

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<sup>38</sup> Bonnie Mac, *How the Page Matters* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), p. 34.

<sup>39</sup> Mabbott, II, 336.

<sup>40</sup> Horatio Smith and James Smith, *Rejected Addresses: Or, the New Theatrum Poetarum*, 2nd edn (London: John Miller, 1812), p. 58.

<sup>41</sup> Edgar Allan Poe, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket, and Related Tales*, ed. by J. Gerald Kennedy, *The World’s Classics* (Oxford: OUP, 1994), p. 295, n. 212.

<sup>42</sup> Nil Korkut, *Kinds of Parody from the Medieval to the Postmodern* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2009), p. 50.

It becomes easier to categorize peritext as fictional when the author is explicitly being satirical or humorous, such as Poe's opening letter to his short story 'Mellonta Tauta':

TO THE EDITORS OF THE LADY'S BOOK: —  
 I have the honor of sending you, for your magazine, an article which I hope you will be able to comprehend rather more distinctly than I do myself. It is a translation, by my friend, Martin Van Buren Mavis, (sometimes called the 'Toughkeepsie Seer',) of an odd-looking MS. which I found, about a year ago, tightly corked up in a jug floating in the *Mare Tenebrarum* — a sea well described by the Nubian geographer, but seldom visited now-a-days, except by the transcendentalists and divers for crotchets.  
 Truly yours,  
 EDGAR A. POE.  
 ON BOARD BALLOON 'SKYLARK',  
 April 1, 2848.<sup>43</sup>

Aside from the letter being dated April Fools' Day one thousand years in the future, there are other characteristics in this letter that would have led Poe's 1848 audience to recognize instantly that it is fictional. His reference to 'Martin Van Buren Mavis, (sometimes called the 'Toughkeepsie Seer')' employs a common nineteenth-century joke of combining a famous name with a common one<sup>44</sup>, but it also combines three figures that would have been well known to Poe's contemporaries. Martin Van Buren was the eighth president of the United States and served from 1837 to 1841. The 'Poughkeepsie Seer' was a nickname given to Andrew Jackson Davis, a gentleman from Poughkeepsie, New York, who had gained fame as a spiritualist supposedly capable of reaching 'the other side' when mesmerized. Andrew Jackson is also the name of the seventh President of the United States, and Van Buren had served under him as Vice President.<sup>45</sup> Many of Poe's readers would likely have instantly recognized that this letter was parodic.

Even though Poe's opening letter is a clear example of fictional peritext, it is common to find peritexts that begin as either authentic or apocryphal and shift to fictional at a later point. Many of the epigraphs in Scott's early Waverley novels, for example, were the products of Scott's own imagination, though he often gave them false attribution, a fact he reveals in the introduction to *Chronicles of the Canongate* (1827):

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<sup>43</sup> Mabbott, II, 1291.

<sup>44</sup> *The Short Fiction of Edgar Allan Poe: An Annotated Edition*, ed. by Stuart Levine and Susan Levine (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1976), p. 348.

<sup>45</sup> *Edgar Allan Poe Annotated and Illustrated: Entire Stories and Poems*, ed. by Andrew Barger (Collierville, TN: Bottletree Books LLC, 2008), p. 313.

The scraps of poetry which have been in most cases tacked to the beginning of chapters in these Novels are sometimes quoted either from reading or from memory, but, in the general case, are pure invention. I found it too troublesome to turn to the collection of the British Poets to discover apposite mottoes, and, in the situation of the theatrical mechanist, who, when the white paper which represented his shower of snow was exhausted, continued the storm by snowing brown, I drew on my memory as long as I could, and when that failed, eked it out with invention. I believe that in some cases, where actual names are affixed to the supposed quotations, it would be to little purpose to seek them in the works of the authors referred to.<sup>46</sup>

Writing epigraphs and attributing them to other authors is indeed telling of what Scott intended the epigraph to do in his works, and I will discuss this in much more detail later in this chapter. For now, let me just say that Scott's admission here to inventing epigraphs means that when he was initially writing them, he expected the audience to accept them as authentic. Once he admits that he has invented many of the epigraphs in the novels, the epigraphs become suspect; ones that we are unable to give provenance turn from apocryphal to fictional. Scott no longer held any expectations of his audience believing the epigraphs to be authentic.

In a work of fiction, one should generally consider footnotes that merely comment on the action in the main text to be fictional, such as a footnote in Chapter 23 of *Pym*:

This day was rendered remarkable by our observing in the south several huge wreaths of the grayish vapour I have spoken of.<sup>47</sup>

Since the author inserted this footnote to comment on the action in the story (fiction), it is easy to classify the footnote itself as fiction.

The inherent trust in peritexts seems to make them more difficult to identify and categorize as fictional, though certainly not always. Some footnotes, for example, are particularly easy to classify as fictional, especially if the note is a comment on the fictional narrative. Indeed, when the author admits to making up peritexts, such as Scott did, it might make it easier, though he does not inform his readers which specific parts he invented. Overt humor or satire can also aid in identifying peritext that can be classified as fictional. However, the way the author presents the work to his or her readers can help to categorize the peritext properly.

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<sup>46</sup> *EEWN*, xx, p. 9.

<sup>47</sup> Poe, *Pym* (New York), p. 181.

### Apocryphal Peritext

Apocryphal peritext is peritext that is fictional yet perceived by the audience or offered by the author as authentic. Some peritexts are easy to categorize as apocryphal not only by what they say but also by how the author presents the work to the audience.

Presentation becomes instrumental in categorizing Poe's 1844 short story that would become known as 'The Balloon Hoax' as apocryphal. The following notice prefates the story:

Astounding News by Express, *via* Norfolk! — The Atlantic crossed in Three Days! Signal Triumph of Mr. Monck Mason's Flying Machine! — Arrival at Sullivan's Island, near Charleston, S.C., of Mr. Mason, Mr. Robert Holland, Mr. Henson, Mr. Harrison Ainsworth, and four others, in the Steering Balloon, 'Victoria', after a passage of Seventy-five Hours from Land to Land! Full Particulars of the Voyage!

This 'announcement' first appeared as a 'screaming newspaper headline'<sup>48</sup> in the *New York Sun* newspaper on April 13, 1844. No title accompanied the piece, as Rufus Griswold adopted the title 'The Balloon Hoax' years after Poe's death. The four men named in Poe's 'headline' were real and well-known figures. Monck Mason was a celebrated balloonist who had successfully completed a voyage from London to Germany in 1836. Robert Hollond (Mabbott notes that Poe consistently misspelled his name 'Holland') had accompanied Mason on the trip and provided some of the financial backings. William Henson was one of the founders of the unsuccessful Aerial Steam Transportation Company. The last person mentioned by Poe, Harrison Ainsworth, was the well-known author of the novel *Guy Fawkes*.<sup>49</sup> Poe's inclusion of these familiar figures added veracity to his story, but it was not long before the newspaper caught on. On April 15, two days after the paper printed Poe's tale, the *New York Sun* retracted the story. Though the paper, as well as at least some of the public, were not fooled for long, it is clear that Poe had intended on deceiving the readers of the paper.

The way in which Poe presents his story to his readers is a clear indication that he intended his audience to receive the work as authentic, but such a presentation is certainly not essential for classifying peritext as apocryphal. The audience can receive Epigraphs, for instance, as authentic, regardless of whether they are authentic or not, especially if an attribution accompanies them. We have already seen Scott's admission to

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<sup>48</sup> Mabbott, II, pp. 1068, 1089.

<sup>49</sup> Mabbott, II, p. 1082, n. 1.

inventing epigraphs. Chapter five of his novel *The Black Dwarf* begins with an epigraph attributed to Beaumont:

The bleakest rock upon the loneliest heath  
Feels, in its barrenness, some touch of spring;  
And, in the April dew, or beam of May,  
Its moss and lichen freshen and revive;  
And thus the heart, most seared to human pleasure,  
Melts at the tear, joys in the smile of woman. —BEAUMONT<sup>50</sup>

Scott's epigraph is a poem attributed to Beaumont, presumably the same Francis Beaumont who Scott had quoted in his earlier novel *The Antiquary*. In chapter four of that novel, he quotes five lines from a play called *Bonduca* that is, in fact, found in the canon of Beaumont and Fletcher's works. Though the lines quoted by Scott in *The Antiquary* are not formally cited, he does follow the quotation with an indication that they are indeed from Beaumont: 'Julius Agricola beheld what our Beaumont has so admirably described'.<sup>51</sup> The quotation attributed to Beaumont in *The Black Dwarf*, however, is not found in any known works of either Beaumont or Fletcher and was likely made up by Scott.<sup>52</sup> Yet by affixing the attribution to the epigraph, Scott expected his readers to believe that the quotation actually was from one of Beaumont's works. Blackwood published *The Black Dwarf* well before Scott admitted to deceiving his readers by inventing chapter mottoes, making this an epigraph that can properly be classified apocryphal, at least at the time Scott wrote the work.

A note that was added to the end of the original preface to Poe's *Pym* in the first British edition of that work published in 1838 by Wiley and Putnam in London offers an interesting example of a delayed apocryphal peritext:

It will be seen by a note at the end of the volume, that Mr. Pym's sudden death (of which we have no particulars) occurred while these sheets were passing through the press; and that the narrative consequently breaks off abruptly in its most important part. But the exciting interest of the story, and the intrinsic evidence of its truth and general accuracy, induce us to give it to the public as it is, without further comment.

THE PUBLISHERS.

67, Paternoster-row, London, Oct. 1838<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> *EEWN*, IVa, p. 36.

<sup>51</sup> *EEWN*, III, p. 30.

<sup>52</sup> *EEWN*, IVa, p. 216.

<sup>53</sup> Poe, *Pym* (London), p. iv.

Though the note somewhat echoes one that Poe had inserted at the end of the work, the British publishers affixed it as a conclusion to the preface, presumably to make the work generally appear more authentic or more believable. They had also omitted the final journal entry in the text in which Pym, Peters, and Nu-Nu reach the Southern pole to find blocking their way ‘a shrouded human figure, very far larger in its proportions than any dweller among men. And the hue of the skin of the figure was of the perfect whiteness of the snow’. It is assumed that the British edition omitted the closing section to make the work seem more realistic, as the final entry may have seemed too unbelievable,<sup>54</sup> supporting my theory that the note attached to the preface served a similar function.

Despite the examples of authentic, fictional, and apocryphal peritexts given above, there are, of course, many examples of peritext that resist the categorization adopted in this current research. For example, T. Hookham and J. Carpenter first published Ann Radcliffe’s novel *The Romance of the Forest: Interspersed with Some Pieces of Poetry* in 1791 in London. However, some later publishers seemed to have had difficulty properly spelling Radcliffe’s name. J. & B. Williams in Exeter attributed the work to ‘Mrs. Ratclife’.<sup>55</sup> Separate publishing firms in New York, Philadelphia, and Boston misspelled her name ‘Ratcliffe’.<sup>56</sup> Another Philadelphia publishing firm, Claxton, Ramsen, and Haffelfinger shortened the title to *The Romance of the Forest* and credited authorship to ‘Anne Ratcliffe’.<sup>57</sup> It would seem, then, that the title in the newer edition is indeed authentic because the publisher chose to rename the work, regardless of the intentions of the original author. However, the author’s name is a bit more difficult. Since the author of the work was not Anne Ratcliffe, nor Mrs. Ratclife, the tendency would be to categorize this peritext as fictional or perhaps apocryphal. Unlike a title, a chapter number, or an epigraph, which can be fluid and change with various editions and prints, the name of an author is a fact that editors and publishers, and even the authors themselves, are unable to alter without making them fictional or apocryphal. One should consider any authorial pseudonym as either apocryphal or fictional, but it becomes clear that determining which could prove difficult if not impossible.

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<sup>54</sup> Poe, *Pym* (New York), p. 198.

<sup>55</sup> Ann Ward Radcliffe, *The Romance of the Forest*, 2 vols (Exeter: J. and B. Williams, 1834).

<sup>56</sup> Ann Ward Radcliffe, *The Romance of the Forest* (Philadelphia: Thomas Bradford, 1795); (New York: E. Duyckinck, 1825); and (Boston: George Clark, 1835).

<sup>57</sup> Ann Ward Radcliffe, *The Romance of the Forest* (Philadelphia: Claxton, Ramsen, and Haffelfinger, 1872).

There are surely many more examples of Gothic fiction peritext that would prove difficult or impossible to classify as either authentic, fictional, or apocryphal. Some peritext seems to fit more than one category, while others do not appear to fit any. Even though the classification system I have adopted here is somewhat limited, it will still provide a useful tool to help recognize and analyze how footnotes and epigraphs work in Gothic fiction, and why they became so important in this particular genre. Having discussed the classification of peritexts employed throughout this chapter, I next want to begin a more in-depth discussion of epigraphs found in the Gothic fiction from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

### **‘From Long Departed Prophets’: Epigraphs in Gothic Fiction**

Though the epigraph can perform several roles, one of the most obvious ways an epigraph operates involves the relationships that exist between the chapter or novel motto and the title and text of the chapter, novel, or volume of works. Most apparently, the epigraph can allow the reader a glimpse into the novel or into the chapter. Scott foreshadows the chapter with an authentic epigraph in the concluding chapter of *The Black Dwarf*:

—Last scene of all, To close this strange eventful history.  
— AS YOU LIKE IT<sup>58</sup>

Scott takes this quotation from Jacques’s soliloquy on the seven stages of life in Act II, Scene 7 of Shakespeare’s play, which actually reads:

Last scene of all, That ends this strange eventful historie.<sup>59</sup>

Despite the slight variation, Scott uses this epigraph to inform the reader that they are approaching the end of the novel, but he also employs Jacques’s comment on the seventh and final stage of life to anticipate the final stage of the Dwarf’s life as he disappears, never to be heard from again. This is perhaps the simplest example of how the epigraph can provide the reader with an indication of what the following chapter holds. This also seems to be the function of the epigraph of which Emerson was so critical. According to

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<sup>58</sup> *EEWN*, IVa, p. 118.

<sup>59</sup> William Shakespeare, ‘As You Like It’, *Folio 1*, 1997, ll. 1143–44

<<http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/Library/Texts/AYL/F1/scene/2.7>> [accessed 26 March 2015].



his statement quoted earlier, Emerson would have put down Scott's novel and read *As You Like It* instead.

Similarly, Poe employs an apocryphal epigraph to anticipate his protagonist's descent into madness and eventual suicide in 'William Wilson':

What say of it? what say of *conscience* grim,  
That spectre in my path?  
CHAMBERLAINE'S PHARRONIDA.<sup>60</sup>

Problems litter this epigraph. To begin with, Poe misspells both the attributed author and the poem title. He is referring to William Chamberlayne's work entitled *Pharonnida*, which he wrote in 1659. However, this passage is not from that poem.<sup>61</sup> By attributing this quotation to a specific author and title, it is assumed that Poe intended his audience to receive it as authentic. Poe uses this motto to foreshadow the doppelganger motif presented in the story. William Wilson's double represents the protagonist's own alter ego, or conscience, that follows the character throughout Europe.

Even though anticipating the chapter or the entire novel became a popular way for Gothic writers to employ the epigraph, some of the most significant roles of the motto in Gothic fiction involve the various ways in which they signify culture or transfer cultural authority. On the most basic level, the epigraph, by its mere presence, situates the work within a specific culture, what Genette refers to as the 'epigraph-effect'. Genette insists that 'The epigraph in itself is a signal (intended as a *sign*) of culture, a password of intellectuality'. As Grutman puts it, 'much like smoke indicates fire (i.e. is an *index* of fire), an epigraph signals culture'.<sup>62</sup> That epigraphs indicate a sign of culture is particularly true in the works of Scott and Poe and other writers in the Romantic period. Audiences came to expect mottoes and saw them as a signal of a new and fashionable style of writing. The mere presence of an epigraph situated the work into the fashion of the time. Additionally, the epigraph also signals that the author employing the epigraph is well read, an intellectual.

When an author ascribes an epigraph, however, there is a transfer of cultural authority at work. Kronshage insists that when an epigraph is identified or ascribed, it

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<sup>60</sup> Mabbott, II, p. 421.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 428. Mabbott notes these errors in the epigraph, and suggests the lines quoted by Poe are 'perhaps a confused echo of a passage from a play by the same author, *Love's Victory*' (p. 428).

<sup>62</sup> Grutman, p. 284.

‘exceeds its own status as a mere sign of culture and becomes the sign of a very particular culture’, typically a culture in which a renowned work or a prominent author were considered valuable. In this sense, what the motto says is much less important than who says it, or from which work it is taken. Kronshage describes this as ‘cultural currency’ or ‘literary currency’.<sup>63</sup> The prestige of the quoted author or the work lends authority to the quoting text. Scott’s admission to faking epigraphs throughout the *Waverley* novels certainly demonstrates this transfer of cultural authority. If he felt as though epigraphs were merely ornamental, then surely, he would have had no reason to ascribe his fabricated epigraphs to any source whatsoever. Yet he did ascribe them, to heralded authors such as Homer (*Ivanhoe* Chapter 13) and Beaumont (*The Black Dwarf*, Chapter 5), but also to ancient tradition: ‘Old Play’, ‘Anonymous’, ‘Old Song’, ‘Border Ballad’. Certainly, this is a conscious effort by Scott to transfer cultural authority to his own works, to create a fake patina of antiquity.

So too do we find a conscious effort to transfer cultural authority in the history of the epigraph found in Poe’s short story ‘MS Found in a Bottle’ discussed earlier. A quotation from a popular contemporary song by Cunningham prefaces early copies of the story, even though the quotation seems to have little relation to the story itself. Yet in later editions of the work, Poe replaced the motto with a quotation from a much older opera. Operas at the time were not only fashionable but also extremely popular. In fact, Poe changed his motto for his short story shortly after the debut of the first grand opera written by an American, *Leonora*, written by William Henry Fry. The opera debuted in Philadelphia in early 1845 and proved to be extremely popular, enough to warrant twelve performances and a revival the following year.<sup>64</sup> The opera quotation, much like the lines from Cunningham’s song, bears only a marginal relationship with Poe’s text, yet the opera quotation carries more literary currency than a contemporary song.

Certainly, the name of the author quoted or the source of the quotation position the text into a cultural tradition, regardless of what the epigraph might say. When the epigraph is ascribed, however, and it does, in fact, bear a significant relationship to the text it precedes, the epigraph becomes even more significant as a means of integrating the work into a cultural tradition. I turn to the epigraph that opened this chapter for

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<sup>63</sup> Kronshage, ‘The Function of Poetic Epigraphs’, p. 248.

<sup>64</sup> John Bewley, ‘Philadelphia Composers: William Henry Fry (1813-1864)’, *Keffer Collection of Sheet Music, Ca. 1790-1895* <<http://www.library.upenn.edu/collections/rbm/keffer/fry.html>> [accessed 11 August 2016].

illustration. The mere presence of the epigraph indicates a certain cultural currency, the epigraph effect. Indeed, chapter mottoes certainly seem fashionable in contemporary Doctoral theses. However, attributing the epigraph to 'Journal Entry' adds little to this currency, only indicating that at some unknown point in the past, someone had commented on 'mottoes and such-like decoraments'. Had I ascribed this quotation to Walter Scott, however, I would have signified a very particular culture of the early nineteenth century. It would have justified my study of epigraphs in the works of Scott and other early nineteenth-century writers. I may have gained even more currency had I noted the quotation originated from *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, signifying that the quotation was not only from one of the most highly regarded and successful writers of the early nineteenth century, but it comes from his personal thoughts recorded in a work of non-fiction.

As Genette notes, by choosing an epigraph the author also 'chooses his peers and thus his place in the pantheon'.<sup>65</sup> George Eliot humorously describes the literary currency a quotation can provide:

A quotation often makes a fine summit to a climax, especially when it comes from some elder author, or from the Bible, so that there is a certain remoteness in the English as if it came from long departed prophets who lived as citizens of the ages that were future to them and had our thoughts before we were born.<sup>66</sup>

Though Eliot was cautioning against the overuse of quotations, her statement underscores the importance of attributed quotations to an earlier generation of writers.

Quoting a renowned author at the beginning of a Gothic text positioned that text within a wider cultural context, but there is also a circular relationship that exists between the text that cites the epigraph and the cited epigraph itself. The epigraph belongs to both works, to both the original author of the epigraph and the author that chooses to place the text at the head of his or her own work. Thus, when Walter Scott quotes Falstaff at the beginning of Chapter 6 of *The Black Dwarf*, both Shakespeare and Scott are present. The reader brings Shakespeare and Falstaff into Scott's world, part and parcel. And when the reader returns to *King Henry IV*, he or she returns with Scott in tow.

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<sup>65</sup> Genette, p. 160.

<sup>66</sup> *The George Eliot Letters*, ed. by Gordon S. Haight, 7 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), v, p. 404. Quoted in David Leon Higdon, 'George Eliot and the Art of the Epigraph', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 25.2 (1970), 127–51 (p. 127) <<https://doi.org/10.2307/2932985>> [accessed 2 January 2019].

Exploring epigraphs as a transfer of cultural authority also provides another tool for investigating the relationships between a wide variety of authors and genres. Rudolf Böhm studied epigraphs used by British writers between 1820 and 1920, analyzing 128 writers and roughly 3,600 mottoes. Employing Böhm's data, Grutman has compiled a list of authors who were quoted more than twenty times:

Shakespeare	386
Wordsworth	70
Beaumont and Fletcher	61
Tennyson	52
Byron; Scott	51
Dante	43
Horace	41
Milton	37
Hugo; Johnson; Schiller; Virgil	32
Spenser; Tasso	28
Crabbe; Euripides	25
Chaucer	23
Aeschylus	22
Cowper; Petrarch	21 <sup>67</sup>

These results may come as no real surprise, as one might expect Shakespeare to top such a list. What may be surprising is the fact that writers of poetry and plays overwhelmingly dominate the list.

Certainly, employing quotations from renowned plays or famous poetry was not always the case for writers of early Gothic fiction, but this list certainly points to an overwhelming tendency of a wide variety of British writers, from several different genres spanning the course of 100 years, to do just that. Indeed, the relationships such mottoes suggest were important enough for Poe, as we have seen, to change his epigraph in early copies of 'MS. Found in a Bottle' from a popular song by Cunningham to a much older and more revered libretto by Quinault. Likewise, when Scott invented his apocryphal epigraphs, he often attributed the passages to authors on this list.

Epigraphs also offer a medium to explore relationships between author, publisher, and reader. For example, when White confronted Poe concerning the offensive nature of 'Berenice', Poe's response was characteristically self-contradictory. On the one hand, he responded by defending the story as representational of a necessary ingredient for a

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<sup>67</sup> Grutman, p. 289.

successful periodical; ‘The history of all Magazines shows plainly that those which have attained celebrity were indebted for it to articles *similar in nature — to Berenice* [...]’.<sup>68</sup> On the other hand, however, Poe agreed; ‘The subject is by far too horrible [...]’.<sup>68</sup> In fact, so horrible that it prompted Poe to remove the four most graphic paragraphs of the story when *The Broadway Journal* printed it some ten years later. Just as importantly, *The Broadway Journal* printing was the first copy to appear with an epigraph:

Dicebant mihi sodales, si sepulchrum amicæ’ visitarem, curas meas  
aliquantulum fore levatas. — *Ebn Zaiat*.

Mabbott identifies Ebn Zaiat, or Ben Zaiat, as a poet and grammarian who lived in Baghdad sometime around the turn of the third century. This line appeared in the main text in previous versions of Poe’s short story, but it was in one of the paragraphs that Poe had removed, prompting the author to insert this epigraph not only to situate his own work into a network of an ancient culture but also to underscore his own intellectual competence. In earlier versions of ‘Berenice’, a translation of this passage appeared in a footnote:

My companions told me I might find some little alleviation of my  
misery, in visiting the grave of my beloved.

The *Journal* edition not only adopted the same text for the epigraph, but it also *removed* the footnote that provided a translation.<sup>69</sup> Here, it seems the power of the deleted footnote lies in the deletion itself. The inclusion of the untranslated epigraph adds both mystery and a sense of the exotic. Indeed, Poe was acutely aware of publisher demands and audience expectations, which were not always the same. Here he employs both the epigraph and the footnote to satisfy both.

As I have already shown, peritexts have a shelf life and can often change over time as a work is reprinted or new editions appear. Changes to the epigraph, or any other form of the peritext, can occur from typographical errors, additions or deletions made by the original author, the editors, or the publishers, or for a variety of other reasons. Scott’s Magnum Opus edition of his novels offers a clear example of how an author can initiate such changes, as Scott made numerous emendations to the main text of the novels and attached a wide variety of delayed peritexts to the collection, most notably new introductions and a large number of new footnotes. These changes, of course, reflect Scott’s desire to amend his own works. However, changes can occur despite the best

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<sup>68</sup> *LEAP*, I, p. 84.

<sup>69</sup> Mabbott, II, p. 219.

efforts of the original author to keep his or her original texts, and these changes can have a significant impact on the way the audience initially receives the work. Just as importantly, an alteration to a footnote or an epigraph that the original author did not authorize can also affect the relationship between the peritext and text itself. The authentic epigraph to Chapter 6 in Scott's *The Black Dwarf* provides an excellent opportunity to both discuss one way in which an epigraph can operate in Gothic fiction and to understand the ramifications of changes that emerge in an epigraph that the original author did not initiate.

In the first edition of *The Black Dwarf*, published by William Blackwood in Edinburgh and John Murray in London in 1816, the following motto prefaces Chapter 6:

Let us not, that are squires of the night's body be called  
Thieves of the day's beauty: let us be Diana's foresters,  
Gentlemen of the shade, minions of the moon.  
Henry the Fourth, Part I <sup>70</sup>

This is indeed an accurate quotation from Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part I*. At least it was, but more on that later. What is immediately noticed is that Scott gains a cultural currency by quoting from *Henry the Fourth*, but to understand how this epigraph operates further in Scott's chapter requires a brief revisiting of Shakespeare.

Scott quotes several lines spoken by Falstaff in Act I, Scene 2, when Falstaff is having a discussion with Hal, also known as Prince Henry. Sir John Falstaff, it must be remembered, is a disgraced knight and he is, by all accounts, a 'black' knight. The scene begins with Falstaff asking Hal for the time. Hal responds by criticizing Falstaff's criminal endeavors and for sleeping all throughout the day. Falstaff answers Hal's scolding not by denying he is a thief, but by telling him that thieves work hard at night and that he only sleeps during the day because he is so tired after a long night of thievery. Falstaff then tells the prince that once he becomes king, he should honor those that work at night and that he should not consider thieves to be a disgrace. Instead, Falstaff says, he should consider them to be aristocrats, gentlemen, and honorable servants. Of course, this is no way for a disgraced knight to respond to a prince, by bragging about his criminal activities. But how are we to take the character of Falstaff? He is one of Shakespeare's most memorable and most complicated characters, and I can only touch on some of the characteristics of Falstaff that are most relevant to Scott's chapter. William Hazlitt says of Falstaff:

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<sup>70</sup> *EEWN*, IVa, p. 42.

He is represented as a liar, a braggart, a coward, a glutton, &c., and yet we are not offended but delighted with him. We no more object to the character of Falstaff in a moral point of view than we should think of bringing an excellent comedian before one of the police officers.<sup>71</sup>

There can be little doubt that Falstaff's humor provides more than enough reason for the audience to forgive his harmless transgressions. Falstaff is undoubtedly mischievous, but he is certainly not malicious. He is grounded, approachable, and the 'one thing specifically characteristic of Falstaff is an amazing fund of good sense'.<sup>72</sup> In many ways, Falstaff is difficult for the other characters to understand. Yet through his wit and humor, Falstaff earns the sympathy of the audience.

To understand how Falstaff's lines relate to Scott's work, we turn back to Chapter 6 of *The Black Dwarf*, where we find the disgraced knight Sir Edward Mauley living under the assumed name Elshender the Recluse, also known as the Black Dwarf. The chapter begins with the dwarf 'seated on his favourite stone':

He might well have seemed the demon of the storm which was gathering, or some gnome summoned forth from the recesses of the earth by the subterranean signals of its approach. He sate thus, with his dark eye turned towards the scowling and blackening heaven.<sup>73</sup>

Immediately, Scott frames the Dwarf as a dark and ominous force, a supernatural gnome-demon. As night approaches, one of the antagonists of the novel, the bandit Willie of Westburnflat arrives on horseback. During a short conversation, the bandit informs the dwarf that he is on his way to exact revenge on Hobbie Elliot because Hobbie had insulted him. Before the Dwarf can respond, Willie rides off towards Hobbie's home. The dwarf knows that he should help Hobbie, and he seems to want to lend him aid. He knows that Willie is a 'villain [, ... a] cool-blooded, hardened, unrelenting ruffian'. On the other hand, he has a high opinion of Hobbie, who he views as 'young and gallant'. Yet Elshender struggles with his conscience as he decides whether to help young Hobbie or not. As he struggles with his decision, he recalls the treatment he has received by the people in his life:

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<sup>71</sup> Hazlitt, p. 124.

<sup>72</sup> William Shakespeare, *King Henry the Fourth*, ed. by Henry Norman Hudson (Boston: Ginn and Company, [c1922]), p. xlvii.

<sup>73</sup> *EEWN*, IVa, p.42.

Do not men receive even my benefits with shrinking horror and ill-suppressed disgust? And why should I interest myself in a race which accounts me a prodigy and an outcast, and which has treated me as such? No; by all the ingratitude which I have reaped—by all the wrongs which I have sustained—by my imprisonment, my stripes, my chains, I will wrestle down my feelings of rebellious humanity!<sup>74</sup>

The chapter concludes with the Black Dwarf deciding not to help the young gallant against the villainous Willie. His refusal to lend aid to Hobbie is a betrayal of the code of chivalry that Elshender, as a knight, should have been required to follow, at least morally. However, Elshender, like Falstaff, is a disgraced knight. He is a recluse and many of the residents believe that he had some sort of pact with the devil. He had been imprisoned for murder. He had vowed to ‘perpetuate the mass of misery’. Though Elshender is not a thief like Falstaff, he is, at this point in the novel, considered by many to be a squire of the night’s body, a black dwarf, in league with the dark forces of the supernatural.

Like Falstaff, however, as the novel progresses the reader comes to like and sympathize with Elshender. Almost everyone he had ever known had treated him unfairly. He was not in league with the devil; it was simply his knowledge of medicine that led people to believe he had supernatural powers. He was not imprisoned for killing his own enemy, but his friend’s rival, the same friend who had stolen his bride-to-be while the dwarf was serving his prison sentence. He may have openly vowed to perpetuate misery, but he continuously showed caring and compassion for others. He endlessly displayed the same good sense that we find in Falstaff. Readers do not object to Elshender from a moral point of view any more than they do Falstaff. In fact, like Falstaff, the audience comes to like the Black Dwarf. They understand what he has gone through and can forgive him for not helping Hobbie in Chapter 6, especially once he finally lends aid to him in later chapters. He is even more liked once he becomes the hero of the novel. The Black Dwarf, in many ways, is much like Falstaff. They are both characters who are misunderstood by those around them. Falstaff is really a harmless fool, just as Elshender is much more compassionate than the other characters perceive him to be. The reader has sympathy for both Falstaff and Elshender.

Despite Scott’s insistence that he invented some of the epigraphs in his novels, this is clearly not the case here. This chapter motto seems well chosen, and it certainly

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 44.



appears to relate directly to the main character in the chapter. That is until a strange occurrence from the past resurfaces. In Lewis Theobald's edition of Shakespeare's works, published in 1733, the scholar had attached this footnote to the quotation Scott would use for his epigraph almost 100 years later:

—Let us not, that are squires of the night's body be called Thieves of the day's beauty; this conveys no manner of idea to me. How could they be called thieves of the day's beauty? They robbed by moonshine; they could not steal the fair day-light. I have ventured to substitute booty: and this I take to be the meaning.<sup>75</sup>

Indeed, a bold move by a scholar to alter the text of Shakespeare. Of course, Theobald was somewhat of a contentious scholar. Prior to his 1733 edition of Shakespeare's works, he had published a response to Alexander Pope's version of *Hamlet*. Theobald boldly entitled his work *Shakespeare Restored, or a specimen of the many errors as well committed as unamended by Mr Pope in his late edition of this poet; designed not only to correct the said Edition, but to restore the true reading of Shakespeare in all the Editions ever published*. It was certainly true that Pope had taken a number of his own broad liberties in his earlier edition of Shakespeare, but he was obviously unhappy with Theobald's *Shakespeare Restored*. In response, Pope made Theobald King Dunce in *The Dunciad*. Pope's satire painted Theobald as the King of Dulness, an assessment that would stick with Theobald for the remainder of his life and beyond.<sup>76</sup>

Theobald's alteration to the lines in *Henry IV*, of course, did not go unnoticed. Even before the end of the eighteenth century, Shakespeare scholar George Steevens addressed Theobald's assumption:

It is true, as Mr. Theobald has observed, that they could not steal the fair day-light; but I believe our poet by the expression 'thieves of the day's beauty', meant only, 'let not us who are body squires to the night', i.e. adorn the night, 'be called a disgrace to the day'. To take away the beauty of the day, may probably mean, to disgrace it.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> *The Works of Shakespeare in Seven Volumes*, ed. by Lewis Theobald, 7 vols (London: A. Battersworth and C. Hitch, J. Tonson, F. Clay, W. Feales, and R. Wellington, 1733), III, p. 347.

<sup>76</sup> David Bevington, 'Lewis Theobald: English Editor', *Encyclopaedia Britannica* <<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Lewis-Theobald>> [accessed 2 October 2016].

<sup>77</sup> *The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare*, ed. by Alexander Pope, and others, 15 vols (London: R. C. and J. Rivington, 1821), XIV, p. 191. Steevens published a 10- volume collection of Shakespeare's works in 1773, and prepared another collection that was published posthumously in 21 volumes in 1803.

It is unclear how widespread Theobald's change became in editions of Shakespeare's works, especially given the reputation he had gotten at the hands of Pope. It does seem clear that most modern editions, in fact, every edition this brief research surveyed of Shakespeare's works published since Steevens published his work in 1773, revert to the original 'beauty'. Several editions that predate Steevens's interpretation of the Shakespeare passage have been found that retain Theobald's revision, including a 1763 edition published in London by C. Hitch and, ironically, Pope's own Second Edition.<sup>78</sup> Regardless of the controversy surrounding the use of 'beauty' or 'booty', if there was still any controversy at all by 1816, Scott chose to employ the former in the first edition of *The Black Dwarf*, as he did again in the Magnum Opus edition of the novel, which appeared as Volume 9 in February 1830. Yet at least as early as 1831, an edition of *The Black Dwarf* appears with the epigraph altered to Theobald's version that replaces 'beauty' with 'booty'. In fact, I have examined 20 editions of *The Black Dwarf* published since 1831 (the year before Scott's death), and 19 of them contain this alteration, the sole exception unsurprisingly being Volume 4a of the Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels, whose editors set out with the intention of maintaining the integrity of Scott's original texts.<sup>79</sup> Even though practically all modern editions of Shakespeare seem to have corrected the line, most modern editions of Scott's novel have not. This small, seemingly innocuous change that continues to find its way into so many editions of *The Black Dwarf* is not without consequences; it at once affects the meaning of the original quotation, the relationship the quotation has to Scott's text, and the expectations of Scott's own audience.

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<sup>78</sup> Printed by J. Tanson, London, 1728. Theobald had first suggested changing 'beauty' to 'booty' in a letter to William Warburton, a close friend to Alexander Pope. This explains why Pope's Second Edition, which predates Theobald's edition, includes the change. See 'The Historie of Henry IV' in William Shakespeare, *Henry IV*, ed. by Samuel Burdett Hemingway, New Variorum (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1936), XXI.

<sup>79</sup> In order to reach this conclusion, I have examined the following editions of *The Black Dwarf*: Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, 1855; NY: International Book Co., c. 1850; Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchitz, 1858; Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1857; New York: A.L. Burt Co., c. 1890; Boston: DeWolfe, Fiske & Co., c. 1880; Boston: The Boston Publishing Co., 1886; Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, c. 1877; Boston: Aldine Book Publishing Co., c. 1880; Boston: Osgood, 1875; Edinburgh: A. and C. Black, 1864; Boston: Estes, c. 1890; North Hollywood, CA: Aegypan, 2006; London & Glasgow: Collins Clear-Type Press, [nd]; eBooks@Adelaide, 2014; Paris: Baudry's European Library, 1840; Middlesex: The Echo Library, 2006; Boston: Samuel H. Parker, 1834; Paris: Baudry's Foreign Library, 1831; and Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993.

The phrase ‘Let us [...] not be called Thieves of the day’s beauty’ focuses the emphasis of the passage to an idea that Falstaff (and, presumably, the dwarf) realizes that he has been judged and labeled a disgrace, perhaps unfairly, as Steevens suggests. Despite Falstaff’s cowardice and questionable moral stance, ‘he is not a corrupter by intention, and he is without malice’.<sup>80</sup> He continuously shows compassion towards Hal. Elshender’s contemporaries have also unfairly judged him as a disgrace, at least up to this point in the novel. Most of the other characters in the novel see him as a ‘black’ dwarf, a dark soul, a recluse in league with Satan, a murderer who is unwilling to assist Hobbie against the villainous Willie of Westburnflat. Yet the reader comes to discover through the course of the novel that Elshender is indeed compassionate and caring towards others.

However, once Shakespeare’s ‘beauty’ is replaced with ‘booty’, the focus is shifted to a much more literal and materialistic idea, suggesting that Falstaff, and presumably one of the two characters in Scott’s chapter, is deserving of empathy not because they have been unfairly judged, but instead because they are literally thieves. Scott’s dwarf was never a thief, and, in fact, often refused monetary rewards even when offered. If Scott intended this epigraph to relate to the chapter that it prefaces, as he did with so many of his other epigraphs, the use of the word ‘beauty’ makes perfect sense, likening Elshender to Falstaff, evoking reader sympathy for the way the characters have been unfairly judged and understanding that they were both good characters, although somewhat misguided at times. However, with the simple change to the word ‘booty’, the reader cannot compare the dwarf to Falstaff at all, for the dwarf had never actually stolen booty. This fact means that either Scott did not intend for the epigraph to relate directly to the characters in the chapter, or that Willie the thief is Scott’s Falstaff. This change in the epigraph would also suggest that somehow, the audience should sympathize with the actual villain of the story. Surely, Scott did not intend for his audience to sympathize with or to forgive the treacherous Willie, as this slight alteration in the epigraph would seem to suggest. The effects of this minor change in Scott’s epigraph show the importance of maintaining the integrity of the quotation as Scott had intended.

Even though the effects of altering Scott’s epigraph are intriguing in their relationship to the chapter itself, there are larger implications. On one level, *The Black*

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<sup>80</sup> Hamilton Wright Mabie, *William Shakespeare; Poet, Dramatist, and Man*, 3rd edn (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1901), p. 239.

*Dwarf* at once portrays a populace steeped in social irresponsibility, reveals the gullibility of the common citizen, and underscores the pervasiveness of superstition in Scotland. In this sense, the novel stages Scott's resistance to mounting pressure for voter reformation that sought to expand the electorate, an issue that I discuss in much more detail in a later chapter. The common citizen, he suggests, is incapable of voting intelligently, unable to see past paralyzing superstition and debilitating superficial judgments. The Shakespeare quotation Scott chose as his epigraph to Chapter 6 in *The Black Dwarf* galvanizes his intent to underscore society's treatment of the dwarf as symbolic of the social ineptitude upon which Scott based his anti-reform platform. The alteration to the quotation seemingly undermines Scott's intentions.

Epigraphs serve a number of important roles in the Gothic fiction of the early nineteenth century. Most obviously, they can anticipate and foreshadow the chapter they preface, offering the reader a glimpse of what to expect. More importantly for the genre, they work towards positioning Gothic fiction from both sides of the Atlantic within a common cultural tradition. On the one hand, their mere presence signals to the audience that the work is part of the fashionable literature of the period, and audiences certainly expected mottoes. This is a crucial point for both Scott and Poe because, as I discussed in the first chapter, they were both writing for the rapidly expanding mass marketplace. On the other hand, however, identifying or attributing the epigraph also provided both a signal to the reader of the author's intellectuality and positioned the text within a specific cultural network from which the epigraph was taken. Such use of the epigraph is indicative of the responsiveness by these authors to critical and public opinion, a characteristic that appears again in the way footnotes operate in their works.

### Gothic Footnotes

Of all the diverse types of peritexts, the footnote seems to have attracted the most negative criticism. Watson points out that the footnote, or annotation, has at various times been termed 'a kind of cowardly collaboration', 'a mask', 'a viper's nest', 'a tomb', 'an aberration', an 'aesthetic evil', 'a fetish', and 'a lump'.<sup>81</sup> G. W. Bowersock

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<sup>81</sup> Alex Watson, 'Historicizing the Jupien Effect: Paratextual Anxieties in Eighteenth-century Critical Discourse', *Working with English: Medieval and Modern Language, Literature and Drama*, 4.1 (2008), 70–88 (p. 71).

suggests, ‘more often than not the principal pleasure they [footnotes] give is to distract the reader from the text he is reading’, and ‘the ordinary footnote [...] deserves no place in the annals of literature’.<sup>82</sup> Despite the negative criticisms footnotes have attracted, they serve numerous roles in early Gothic fiction that are important to the genre.

Notes attached to texts were certainly not new to writers of Gothic fiction. They have appeared in many texts and have occupied a variety of physical spaces: in the margins, on opposite pages, in the center of the text, or as additional volumes. However, notes placed at the bottom of the page became exceedingly common in Gothic fiction from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Perhaps the most common use of footnotes is simply to cite a passage or refer the reader to a source for a quotation. Certainly, writers of Gothic fiction employed the footnote in this way, and I have already given examples in the works of both Scott and Poe. However, footnotes can also provide writers with a way to explain or elaborate on materials or events found in the main text. It is in these explanations and elaborations where footnotes work in unique ways in Gothic fiction, where they provide a means to integrate the supernatural into the text in a more believable way.

In the preface to her 1777 Gothic novel *Champion of Virtue* (a title revised the following year to *The Old English Baron*), Clara Reeve is already aware of the difficulties Gothic writers faced in joining the natural and supernatural. By Reeve’s own admission, she was attempting to imitate and improve on Walpole’s *Castle of Otranto*, in which the only defect she noticed was that it did not stay ‘within the utmost verge of probability’, that it did not ‘keep within certain limits of credibility’.<sup>83</sup> Reeve felt as though the supernatural elements in *Otranto* – a gigantic helmet and sword, a picture that comes to life, a ‘skeleton ghost’- excited laughter instead of fear. Reeve’s goal in *Champion of Virtue*, and one of the aims of many writers of Gothic fiction that followed her was to keep the supernatural elements that the public desired but to present them in a more convincing or plausible manner. Though *Champion of Virtue* contains only three footnotes, they increasingly became a tool for many writers of Gothic fiction in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to connect the physical and the metaphysical, the familiar and the unfamiliar, the natural world and the supernatural one while attempting to keep within certain limits of credibility.

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<sup>82</sup> G. W. Bowersock, ‘The Art of the Footnote’, *The American Scholar*, 53.1 (1984), 54–62 (p. 54).

<sup>83</sup> Clara Reeve, *The Old English Baron: A Gothic Story* (London: Edward and Charles Dill, 1778), p. vi.

By way of example, I turn to Charles Brockden Brown's Gothic novel *Wieland, or The Transformation: An American Tale* (1798). Theodore Wieland hears voices compelling him to kill his family, which he eventually does. His sister Clara discovers from her uncle Cambridge that he was not put to death for his crimes, but instead, his doctors found him to be suffering from 'sudden madness' and 'condemned to perpetual imprisonment'. Clara, surprised by her uncle's response, asks him if the Wieland family had a history of mental illness or of hearing voices. Her uncle then tells the story of Clara's maternal grandfather, Cambridge's own father, who, according to Cambridge, lost a brother when he was younger. Upon his brother's death, Clara's grandfather 'entertained the belief that his own death would be inevitably consequent on that of his brother'. These feelings eventually subsided, and the man went on to have a normal life. Twenty-one years later, while on vacation, one evening 'his limbs trembled and his features betrayed alarm. He threw himself into the attitude of one listening. He gazed earnestly in a direction in which nothing was visible to his friends'.<sup>84</sup> Moments later, Cambridge tells Clara, he leaped off a cliff and plunged to his death.

Cambridge's story in the main text of Brown's work implies that the supernatural voices his father heard led to his suicide. However, to lend credibility to these supernatural voices, to make hearing voices plausible, Cambridge insists the cause was scientifically explainable as 'maniacal', a condition that presumably causes the sufferer to hear voices. As 'proof', the author attaches an apocryphal footnote to Cambridge's claim:

*Mania Mutabilis*. See Darwin's *Zoonomia*, vol. ii, class III. 1. 2. where similar cases are stated.<sup>85</sup>

In fact, in Volume 2 of Erasmus Darwin's *Zoonomia: Or, The Laws of Organic Life* (1796), in a section titled '*The Orders, Genera, and Species, of the Third Class of Diseases*. CLASS III. DISEASES OF VOLITION', we find '*Mania mutabilis*. Mutable madness'. Darwin defines the disease as one that causes patients to mistake 'imagination for realities', but his 'similar cases' are in fact not at all similar to the one describing the suicide of Clara's grandfather. Darwin presents two cases that detail the death of patients due to starvation, but in both cases, the death was the result of the patients refusing to eat. There are no examples presented by Darwin to suggest someone

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<sup>84</sup> Charles Brockden Brown, *Wieland; or The Transformation: An American Tale*. (New York: H. Caritat, 1798), pp. 216–18.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 218, n. 1.

would suddenly jump off a cliff because he or she were suffering from *Mania mutabilis*.

Darwin describes the symptoms of this disease:

The patient is liable carefully to conceal the object of his desire or aversion. But a constant inordinate suspicion of all people, and a carelessness of cleanliness, and of decency, are generally concomitants of madness. Their designs [...] are generally timid, they are therefore less to be dreaded.<sup>86</sup>

The acts carried out by Clara's grandfather, both during the twenty-one-year span since his brother's death and the moments before his suicide, are in direct opposition to Darwin's explanation of *Mania mutabilis*. He first 'gazed earnestly in a direction in which nothing was visible' and had the 'attitude of one listening'. He made no effort to 'conceal the object of his desire or aversion', as Darwin suggests one might do. In fact, before jumping off the cliff, Cambridge had said that his father had 'told them [his companions] that his brother had just delivered to him a summons, which must be instantly obeyed'. Not only did he fail to conceal his vision, he openly announced it as his dead brother. Additionally, Cambridge said that his grandfather 'then took an [sic] hasty and solemn leave of each person, and [...] rushed to the edge of the cliff, threw himself headlong, and was seen no more'.<sup>87</sup> According to Darwin, someone suffering from such a condition would likely have become suspicious of others and lose his sense of decency, meaning it is unlikely he would have had the decency to 'take leave' of his companions. More likely, he would have avoided them because he would have been suspicious of them. Brown manipulated what was viewed as an actual 'scientific' explanation in order to present the supernatural in his fiction in a believable way. Even though the audience may or may not believe that supernatural voices may have led to Clara's Uncle's suicide and that supernatural voices are also to blame for Theodore murdering his own family, hearing voices seems much more believable because 'science' says it is possible.

Adding supernatural elements to a story became a hallmark of Gothic fiction. Sroka insists, 'the introductions [in Scott's novels] subtly express a theory which attempts to restore balance to the relationship between fact and fiction, between the real world and the world of the imagination, the two worlds of the Waverley novels'.<sup>88</sup> Scott's

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<sup>86</sup> Erasmus Darwin, *Zoonomia; or, the Laws of Organic Life*, 2 vols (London: J. Johnson, 1796), II, p. 305.

<sup>87</sup> Charles Brockden Brown, p. 218.

<sup>88</sup> Kenneth M. Sroka, 'Fact, Fiction, and the Introductions to the Waverley Novels', in *The Wordsworth Circle* Vol. 2, No. 4 (Autumn, 1971), pp. 142-152 (p. 142)

introductions certainly do that, but it is also in the footnotes where these supernatural elements gain a sense of credibility, and perhaps no author employed footnotes in this way better than Walter Scott. In the introduction to *The Black Dwarf* in the Magnum Opus edition, for instance, Scott claims that he based the character of the Black Dwarf on a real dwarf named David Ritchie, but admits, ‘The author has invested Wise Elshie [the Black Dwarf] with some qualities which made, in the eyes of the vulgar, a man possessed of supernatural power’. The characteristics that make the dwarf appear to have supernatural powers are certainly obvious throughout the text, but it is in a delayed apocryphal footnote in the first chapter that the reader is first acquainted with ‘the most authentic account of the apparition of the Black Dwarf’, where the real-life David Ritchie is transformed into the supernatural Elshender the Recluse:

[H]e was the most hideous dwarf that the sun had ever shone on. His head was of full human size, forming a frightful contrast with his height, which was considerably under four feet. It was thatched with no other covering than long matted red hair, like that of the felt of a badger in consistence, and in colour a reddish brown, like the hue of the heather blossom. His limbs seemed of great strength; nor was he otherwise deformed than from their undue proportion in thickness to his diminutive height.

Though the physical description of this ‘hideous dwarf’ may implicitly point to the supernatural, the footnote continues to relate a ‘well-attested’ legend of two hunters as they encounter the dwarf:

The terrified sportsman stood gazing on this horrible apparition, until, with an angry countenance, the being demanded by what right he intruded himself on those hills, and destroyed their harmless inhabitants. [...] The hunter humbled himself before the angry goblin [...]. The gnome now became more communicative, and spoke of himself as belonging to a species of beings something between the angelic race and humanity. [...] He pressed the sportsman to visit his dwelling, which he said was hard by, and plighted his faith for his safe return. But at this moment the shout of the sportsman's companion was heard calling for his friend, and the dwarf, as if unwilling that more than one person should be cognisant of his presence, disappeared as the young man emerged from the dell to join his comrade.

This passage of the footnote is much more explicit in characterizing the dwarf as a supernatural being. The hunters are frightened, and the dwarf is no longer merely a strange looking man, but an apparition, a goblin, a gnome that is neither a human nor an angel. Now that Scott has turned the dwarf into a supernatural being, he concludes this extraordinarily long footnote by suggesting the dwarf is evil:



It was the universal opinion of those most experienced in such matters, that if the shooter had accompanied the spirit, he would, notwithstanding the dwarf's fair pretences, have been either torn to pieces or immured for years in the recesses of some fairy hill.<sup>89</sup>

William Blackwood and John Murray published *The Black Dwarf* as part of the First Series of *Tales of My Landlord*, and the first chapter, where this footnote is found, sets the stage for the story itself. Though the tale is framed in an elaborate web of questionable authorship, this footnote demonstrates Scott's use of the footnote to integrate a more convincing supernatural dwarf into his novel, a dwarf who is not only based on a real-life person but also one whose supernatural incarnations have been 'well-attested'.

In *The Black Dwarf*, Scott employs the footnote to introduce into his novel a dwarf who appears to be some sort of supernatural being. This is a reversal of roles from the way Brown employed the footnote in the example discussed above, where the supernatural was in the main text and the footnote gave it credibility. In Scott's preface, the main text is, in fact, the credible source, simply telling the story of the real-life Davie Ritchie, while the footnote reveals the supernatural. Matthew Lewis uses a strategy similar to Scott's by introducing the supernatural by way of a footnote in Chapter 2 of *The Monk*. The Monk Ambrosio learns that his companion Rosario is actually a woman named Matilda who has disguised herself because she is in love with the monk. She agrees to leave the monastery if Ambrosio picks her a flower. As Ambrosio is picking this flower, a poisonous serpent bites him, and the doctor tells him that he only has three days to live. Death from a snake bite is certainly plausible. Snakes bite people occasionally, and obviously, the treatment for venomous snakebites during the time of the Spanish Inquisition (the setting for the novel) was far from advanced. This normal or natural occurrence, however, becomes less than normal when the reader discovers that the serpent that bites the Monk is a fictional 'cientipedoro'. Lewis explains in a footnote:

The cientipedoro is supposed to be a native of Cuba, and to have been brought into Spain from that island in the vessel of Columbus.<sup>90</sup>

Indeed, a strange turn of events. The implications of the bite from a poisonous serpent in Lewis's 'contrived Eden, the garden of lustful desire'<sup>91</sup> are clear. The bite and the

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<sup>89</sup> *EEWN*, xxva, pp. 163–64.

<sup>90</sup> Matthew G. Lewis, *The Monk: A Romance*, 3 vols (London: J. Bell, 1796), I, p. 127.

<sup>91</sup> Daniel Robert Persia, 'Beauty in the Abyss: (De)creating Human Form in Lewis's *The Monk*', *Articulate: A Journal of Literary and Cultural Criticism*, 16 (2011), 53–68 (p. 60).

subsequent prognosis of imminent death are symbolic of the protagonist's transition from a pious religious leader to his descent into malicious acts of rape and murder. So, too, have the implications of the venomous creature's native habitat of Cuba been discussed in the frameworks of both the Atlantic slave trade and the migration of Gothic fiction. James Carson views the *cientipedor* bite as symbolic of how 'the fauna of Cuba begin the process of New World vengeance against the old regime hypocrite and Faustian overreacher Ambrosio'.<sup>92</sup> Eduardo Gonzalez notes the 'queer landing' of the Cuban native *cientipedor* in 'Gothic Spain' as an example of the 'accidental' way that 'Gothic might have anything indigenous to do with the Caribbean'.<sup>93</sup> What both Carson and Gonzalez overlook, however, is the significance of the fact that Lewis created a *fictional* serpent to serve his purposes. If Lewis's intentions here were to comment on the Atlantic slave trade or to discuss possible characteristics of Gothic fiction in terms of Caribbean influences, certainly he could have opted for one of the known venomous snakes indigenous to Cuba or one of the five or so venomous snakes that are native to Spain. He could even have chosen a creature indigenous to any number of regions that were so heavily involved in the slave trade, including the Americas. Instead, Lewis opted to create a supernatural serpent from his own imagination. Lewis employs the footnote here to introduce the supernatural into his Gothic novel in a way that seems plausible.

Footnotes provided authors with an opportunity to introduce supernatural elements into their fictions without it seeming to be overly fantastic, or as Scott himself put it, '*extra moenia flammantia mundi*'.<sup>94</sup> Even though many early writers of Gothic fiction occasionally employed footnotes in this way, they become quite common in the Gothic works of Scott and Poe. Of course, both Scott and Poe were trying to appeal not only to the reading public but also to critics of the time, especially critics that had been so

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<sup>92</sup> James P. Carson, *Populism, Gender, and Sympathy in the Romantic Novel* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 90.

<sup>93</sup> Eduardo González, *Cuba and the Fall: Christian Text and Queer Narrative in the Fiction of José Lezama Lima and Reinaldo Arenas* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), p. 16.

<sup>94</sup> Scott, 'Supernatural', p. 63. This Latin phrase is from the writings of Lucretius and translates as 'outside the flaming walls of the universe'. Lucretius was discussing Epicurus here, suggesting that Epicurus had shown that the mind can transcend the body, travel beyond the borders that the body is unable to transgress. For Scott, Hoffman's imagination has traveled too far beyond these borders. See *Lucretius on Life and Death, in the Metre of Omar Khayyam to Which Are Appended Parallel Passages from the Original*, ed. by W. H. Mallock (London: A. and C. Black, 1900).

censorious of the genre. Reeve had early on recognized that many critics condemned the genre:

Although some persons of wit and learning have condemned them [Gothic stories] indiscriminately, I would venture to affirm, that even those who so much affect to despise them under one form, will receive and embrace them under another.<sup>95</sup>

Of course, the other form to which Reeve alludes is any work in which the supernatural is more plausible than it is in *Otranto*. Many writers of Gothic fiction sought to retain the supernatural characteristics of the genre that had been so popular amongst the public, while at the same time, keep the supernatural plausible. In doing so, these writers were responding to both critical and public taste, much as they did with the use of epigraphs. Though epigraphs and footnotes were not exclusive to Gothic fiction, they did become important tools that Gothic writers on both sides of the Atlantic employed differently.

In many ways, epigraphs and footnotes served to advance public and critical views of Gothic fiction, or at the very least some the Gothic elements in fiction, as a serious art form. From various perspectives, the renewed interest in the genre bolstered the confidence of writers of Gothic fiction. Some of these writers would come to feel as though they were a part of the established literati. With new confidence in their works, writers of Gothic fiction soon began to define their own aesthetics. One of the unique aesthetic categories would become the *grotesque*, an aesthetic that would become a tool which Gothic writers would refine and utilize throughout their works. In the following chapter, I will define the grotesque and explore how this aesthetic idea in some ways came to define Gothic fiction across the Atlantic world.

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<sup>95</sup> Reeve, p. iv.

### Chapter Three

#### **‘The Ludicrous Heightened’: The Gothic Grotesque Aesthetic**

The early nineteenth-century literary aesthetics the sublime, the picturesque, and the beautiful have a distinct importance in the period. All have certainly received extensive scholarly attention. Eighteenth-century philosophers, artists, and writers, from Burke to Gilpin, from Price to Kant, have all conceptualized these aesthetic modes in contemporary terms. Indeed, modern scholars have researched them enough to allow them to posit relatively clear definitions of the aesthetics and to reach a clear understanding of how they work. This chapter, however, is not centrally concerned with these major and well-documented aesthetics. The focus here is on the grotesque, an aesthetic that has received considerably less attention. The grotesque is an aesthetic that is especially relevant to nineteenth-century Gothic texts because, as I have argued in the previous chapter, as writers of Gothic fiction began to view their literary creations more and more as true forms of art, they began to define their own aesthetic categories, particularly the grotesque. The aesthetic largely came to be refined, defined, and articulated primarily by writers of Gothic fiction. In particular, Scott and Poe are among the authors typically associated with early conceptions of the literary grotesque, a fact that encourages a transatlantic approach to the study of the aesthetic. In fact, Scott and Poe were among the first to articulate the term within the framework of literary aesthetics. Many scholars credit Scott as the first to apply the term grotesque to a work of literature when he reviewed the supernatural works of E. T. A. Hoffman.<sup>1</sup> For Poe, the grotesque became such an important aesthetic in his works that he titled one of his most iconic collections *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*. Because of the central role the grotesque aesthetic plays in the Gothic fictions of both Scott and Poe, it becomes essential to understand the term in relation to their writings.

Amongst the aesthetic categories significant to late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century literary works, the grotesque also presents a unique problem for modern scholars. Unlike some of the other aesthetics of the period, there are no eighteenth-century essays on the grotesque. There are no early philosophical inquiries or extended

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<sup>1</sup> Walter Scott, ‘On the Supernatural in Fictitious Composition; and Particularly on the Works of Ernest Theodore William Hoffman’, in *The Foreign Quarterly Review*, 1.1 (July 1827), 60-97.

studies of the grotesque, at least not from a literary perspective. Scholars have had to predominately rely on clues, allusions, and ambiguities to decide on what the grotesque actually means. Largely because of these ambiguities, defining the grotesque has become rather problematic. It has been inconsistently described as a ‘corruption’,<sup>2</sup> ‘the estranged world’,<sup>3</sup> ‘gay and bright’,<sup>4</sup> a ‘ludicrous- horror’,<sup>5</sup> ‘the ambivalently abnormal’,<sup>6</sup> ‘a species of confusion’,<sup>7</sup> an ‘interaction of opposing forces’,<sup>8</sup> and a ‘disharmony’.<sup>9</sup> Criticism has pointed to grotesque characteristics found in writings from Dante to Dickens, from Chaucer to Coleridge.<sup>10</sup> In fact, so varied have the meanings of the grotesque become that Geoffrey Harpham insists:

The field of the grotesque is exceptional in that although there is almost no agreement among critics, there is almost no real disagreement either. It is nearly impossible to argue about the subject because nobody has yet authoritatively ascertained or delimited the material so that it can be arranged, much less interpreted.

He goes on to declare that modern usage of the term is so varied that the grotesque ‘is in danger of losing all meaning and passing out of critical discourse altogether’.<sup>11</sup>

It is my contention that one of the reasons that scholars have had such difficulty in determining what the grotesque means is because they have been looking for answers in the wrong places. I will argue that the grotesque is an aesthetic that is more operative than the above arguments seem to suggest, and there is no better place to consider the grotesque form than in an exploration of the works of Scott and Poe. There are two reasons that these two authors are particularly suited for a study of the grotesque aesthetic. The first I have already touched on: Scott and Poe were among the first to apply the term to literature. Secondly, examining the grotesque through Scott and Poe also provides a transatlantic perspective, which will allow for a broader discussion and

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<sup>2</sup> John Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*, 3 vols (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1881), III, p. 126.

<sup>3</sup> Wolfgang Kayser, *The Grottesque in Art and Literature*, trans. by Ulrich Weisstein, Morningside Edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), p. 37.

<sup>4</sup> Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. by Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington, IN.: Indiana University Press, 1984), p. 47.

<sup>5</sup> Frances Barasch, ‘The Grotesque as a Comic Genre’, *Modern Language Studies*, 14.1 (1985), 3–11 (p. 3).

<sup>6</sup> Philip Thomson, *The Grotesque*, The Critical Idiom Number 24 (London: Methuen & Co., 1972), p. 27.

<sup>7</sup> Geoffrey Harpham, *On the Grotesque: Strategies of Contradiction in Art and Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> Lee Byron Jennings, *The Ludicrous Demon: Aspects of the Grotesque in German Post-Romantic Prose* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1963), p. 14.

<sup>9</sup> Justin Edwards and Rune Graulund, *Grotesque* (New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 68.

<sup>10</sup> Geoffrey Harpham, ‘The Grotesque: First Principles’, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 34.4 (1976), 461–68 (p. 461) <<https://doi.org/10.2307/430580>> [accessed 2 January 2019].

<sup>11</sup> Harpham, *On the Grotesque*, p. xviii.

better understanding of the aesthetic. It is through analyzing how the term is used and how the grotesque functions in the works of Scott and Poe that scholars can develop a reference point in order to work towards defining the grotesque. To my knowledge, there exists no extensive survey of the grotesque that has focused on these two writers who, at least to me, seem to hold the most promise for coming to an understanding of what the grotesque means. However, before examining Scott and Poe specifically, I first want to explore some of the critical debates surrounding the grotesque in more detail.

Especially since the 1957 publication of Wolfgang Kayser's seminal work *Das Grotteske: Seine Gestaltung in Malerei und Dichtung* (translated from German into English in 1963 as *The Grotesque in Art and Literature*), the term grotesque has become an animated topic of discourse for a number of literary theorists. One hundred years earlier, art critic John Ruskin had codified both the 'ludicrous' and the 'fearful' elements of the grotesque in architecture in terms of a meaningful physical aesthetic, but also an aesthetic with possible metaphysical implications, one that symbolizes the 'corruption of the Renaissance itself'.<sup>12</sup> Ruskin sees this corruption as emblematic of a wider move away from both social and Christian values. The 'base grotesqueness' that he perceives to be an essential part of Gothic architecture represents 'the worst and basest ever built by the hands of men', and 'can sometimes be hardly otherwise defined than as the perpetuation in stone of the ribaldries of drunkenness'. The corrupt or 'ignoble grotesque' can be differentiated from the refined or 'noble grotesque' found in the Early Renaissance, which he identifies with a 'magnificent condition of fantastic imagination'. For Ruskin, the noble grotesque is developed through an understanding and appreciation that the artist feels about a subject 'even while he jests with it', while the creator of the ignoble grotesque 'can feel and understand nothing, and mocks at all things with laughter of the idiot and the cretin'.<sup>13</sup> Both Scott and Poe saw humor as an essential element of the grotesque, as I will demonstrate later in this chapter, but as the grotesque began to garner modern scholarly attention as a literary aesthetic, the laughter of the idiot and the cretin became quite a polarizing characteristic.

What I have in mind here are the critical debates surrounding the opposing theories of the grotesque put forward by Wolfgang Kayser and Mikhail Bakhtin. Kayser, in his influential work *The Grotesque in Art and Literature*, first sought to elevate the term

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<sup>12</sup> Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*, III, pp. 126, 2.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, pp. 112, 121, 140.

grotesque as a serious literary aesthetic by focusing on the metaphysical implications of the horrible, while minimizing the humorous aspects. For Kayser, the grotesque symbolizes a dark and ominous force that presents ‘an estranged or alienated world’ replete with a demonic infestation. In this sense, our world, the world with which we are familiar, is turned on its head and we are no longer able to recognize what we consider normal. The grotesque ‘instills fear of life’ by creating an ‘awareness that the familiar and apparently harmonious world is alienated under the impact of abysmal forces, which break it up and shatter its coherence’. Kayser’s dismal interpretation of the grotesque still recognizes that humor may contribute to the aesthetic form, but he diminishes its role, suggesting, ‘Laughter originates on the comic and caricatural fringe of the grotesque. Filled with bitterness, it takes on characteristics of the mocking, cynical, and ultimately satanic laughter while turning into the grotesque’.<sup>14</sup> Kayser certainly has not been the only critic to suggest that humor plays only a minor role in the grotesque. Kenneth Burke, for example, rejects the role of humor in the grotesque altogether, arguing instead, ‘The grotesque is the cult of incongruity *without* the laughter’ (his emphasis). The grotesque only takes on a comic role if one is ‘out of sympathy’ with it, in which case we can no longer consider it a grotesque, but is transformed into an ‘unintentional burlesque’. Conversely, if one is ‘in sympathy with it, it is in deadly earnest’.<sup>15</sup>

Mikhail Bakhtin also defends the merits of the grotesque as a valid and meaningful literary term in *Rabelais and His World*, but his approach is contrary to Kayser’s dark interpretation. Bakhtin centers on the ‘carnavalesque’ traits of the grotesque and diminishes the role of the fearful. Through an examination of the works of French Renaissance writer François Rabelais, Bakhtin argues that the atmosphere of the carnival, with its disregard for social, political, and even religious status, and through its spirit of laughter, liberates from the horrors of the real world. In this sense, the grotesque is a degradation of social hierarchies. The grotesque ‘liberates the world from all that is dark and terrifying’ and ‘takes away all fears and is therefore completely gay and bright’.<sup>16</sup>

Likely due to the contradiction of the two studies, Kayser’s *The Grotesque in Art and Literature* and Bakhtin’s *Rabelais and his World* are often the points of departure for

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<sup>14</sup> Kayser, pp. 184–87.

<sup>15</sup> Kenneth Burke, *Attitudes Toward History*, 3rd edn (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 58.

<sup>16</sup> Bakhtin, p. 47.

modern discussions of the grotesque as a literary aesthetic. Harpham notes of the two studies:

Both are prodigiously well informed, carefully argued, persuasive accounts. And they manage to contradict each other utterly on the most basic premises. Authority is even more widely dispersed among the lesser lights, so that, in mastering the field, one watches it atomize into fine mist.<sup>17</sup>

While Kayser's vision of the grotesque emphasizes the demonic, the evil, and the acrimony, Bakhtin centers on the comic and humorous aspects. These two theories represent what might be considered the extreme ends of the grotesque spectrum.

Many recent criticisms have largely synthesized the polarized approaches presented by Kayser and Bakhtin by recognizing the necessity of both the horrible and the humorous in the grotesque. Harpham insists, 'For an object to be grotesque, it must arouse three responses. Laughter and astonishment are two; either disgust or horror is the third'.<sup>18</sup> Frances Barasch describes the grotesque as 'ludicrous-horror'.<sup>19</sup> Willard Farnham concedes that when the horrible becomes less fearful, it is capable of producing humor.<sup>20</sup> These rather broad and often elusive descriptions, however, bring us only slightly further towards an understanding of what the grotesque actually means, a point in which critics certainly have yet to come to a consensus. Although Philip Thomson recognizes the difficulties in pinning down an accurate and encompassing definition of grotesque, he finalizes his understanding of it as '*the unresolved clash of incompatibles in work and response*' with a 'secondary definition' as '*the ambivalently abnormal*'.<sup>21</sup> For Kayser, the grotesque is 'a game with the absurd', it represents 'an attempt to invoke and subdue the demonic aspects of the world'.<sup>22</sup> Many critics avoid an explicit definition, relying instead on underscoring characteristics or notions of the grotesque. In Harpham's study, for instance, the author wastes no time in informing the reader that the aim of his book is not to offer a definition, but to 'explore the resources of a single protean idea that is capable of assuming a multitude of forms'. He does go on to suggest that the grotesque

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<sup>17</sup> Harpham, 'The Grotesque', p. 463.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Barasch, p. 3.

<sup>20</sup> Willard Farnham, *The Shakespearean Grotesque: Its Genesis and Transformations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 37.

<sup>21</sup> Thomson, p. 27.

<sup>22</sup> Kayser, pp. 184, 187, 188.



is ‘a species of confusion’, ‘our understanding unsatisfied’,<sup>23</sup> suggesting that if we could define it, it would no longer be grotesque.<sup>24</sup>

Despite the difficulties in defining the aesthetic, there are certain traits of the grotesque on which many theorists agree. One of the most accepted is ‘disharmony’, a ‘clash’ of the heterogeneous. Thomson insists that disharmony is ‘the most consistently distinguished characteristic of the grotesque’.<sup>25</sup> Kayser describes a similar trait in terms of ‘tensions’ or even ‘ominous tensions’ arising from contradictions to reason and rationalism.<sup>26</sup> Lee Byron Jennings discusses the ‘interaction of opposing forces’ as a key ingredient of the grotesque form.<sup>27</sup> For Thomson, this disharmony must ‘be seen’ in both the work itself and ‘in the reaction it produces’. Thomson further suggests that for this clash to constitute the grotesque, it must be ‘unresolved’. Though Thomson does not fully explain how this lack of resolution works, he suggests that if a reader initially misinterprets the horror as having a comedic feature though it turns out to be horror without an intended comic effect, then the work is not grotesque. Likewise, the same difficulties occur if one expects or mistakenly perceives horror or terror in a text that is in fact merely funny. This lack of a resolution is what distinguishes the grotesque from other modes, such as paradox and irony, which similarly rely on a sort of conflict. The difficulties with such an ambiguous approach to the aesthetic are obvious. Thomson does acknowledge, however, that there is often an inconsistent balance of the humorous and horrifying found in the grotesque, a disharmony.<sup>28</sup> The disharmony and contradiction to rationalism that Thomson and other critics discuss are essential elements in the grotesque of Scott and Poe, as I will soon show.

Other commonly discussed characteristics of the grotesque include extravagance, exaggeration, and excess, characteristics that, as Thomson tells us, have ‘often led to the association of the grotesque with the fantastic and fanciful’. Of course, these three characteristics can be tied to disharmony as well. In fact, Edwards and Graulund suggest that exaggeration, extravagance, and excess represent ‘the three vital components of

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<sup>23</sup> Harpham, *On the Grotesque*, pp. xv–xxi, 3.

<sup>24</sup> Lee Byron Jennings, ‘Review’, *Modern Philology*, 82.4 (1985), 451–54 (p. 452).

<sup>25</sup> Thomson, p. 20.

<sup>26</sup> Kayser, pp. 98, 184.

<sup>27</sup> Jennings, *The Ludicrous Demon*, pp. 14–15.

<sup>28</sup> Thomson, pp. 20–21.

disharmony'. They further separate exaggeration into two distinct categories, one being the exaggeration of 'individual parts', the other the 'entire frame'.<sup>29</sup> These three characteristics work to blur the line between what is real, or at least possible, and what is not. In other words, the world the author creates in the work must at least seem possible for us to consider the work to be grotesque.<sup>30</sup> By this account, the grotesque aesthetic cannot be attained through depictions of pink unicorns or green Martians. The grotesque is thus separated from fantasy stories and fairy tales, where the author creates fantastic worlds with no expectations of plausibility. This is a point wrought out in Kayser's understanding of the grotesque:

Viewed from the outside, the world of the fairy tale could also be regarded as strange and alien. Yet its world is not estranged, that is to say, the elements in it which are familiar and natural to us do not suddenly turn out to be ominous. It is our world which has to be transformed.<sup>31</sup>

One might consider various versions of the tale Cinderella, for example, to be grotesque: the horror of a wicked stepmother and evil stepsisters, the humor of a pumpkin transforming into a chariot, mice into horses, a rat into a coachman, lizards into servants. Yet scholars do not typically consider this story to be grotesque because of the lack of the plausibility of these humorous elements. Our world, the world with which we are familiar, does not suddenly become threatening.

Also noticed in many works considered grotesque is what Thomson simply labels 'abnormality', which he considers 'an essential ingredient of the grotesque'.<sup>32</sup> Abnormality can also be closely tied to disharmony, a disharmony that represents what many consider the primary characteristic of the grotesque, one that produces conflicting emotions: funny and fearful, humorous and horrible, comic and demonic. These conflicting emotions are most strongly realized when what we may consider normal, we suddenly transform into the abnormal. As an example, Thomson points to the emotions a child may experience when someone makes a funny face at them:

The child will laugh at the face pulled only up to a certain point (presumably, while it is still sure of the face as a familiar thing); once this point is passed, once the face becomes so distorted that the child feels threatened, it cries in fear.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Edwards and Graulund, p. 68.

<sup>30</sup> Thomson, pp. 22–24.

<sup>31</sup> Kayser, p. 185.

<sup>32</sup> Thomson, p. 25.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., pp. 24–25.

Thomson's example provides a simplistic view of the relationship between the normal and the abnormal, but he understands this relationship is much more complicated. His secondary definition of the grotesque as '*the ambivalently abnormal*' underscores the idea that what we consider normal is largely determined by its relationship to what we consider abnormal, which continuously changes and adapts to its environment. Harpham agrees:

We apprehend the grotesque in the presence of an entity- an image, object, or experience- simultaneously justifying multiple mutually exclusive interpretations which commonly stand in relation of [...] normative to abnormal.<sup>34</sup>

Jennings also understands the fluid nature of the abnormal due to its reliance on defining or identifying the normal. For Jennings, the clash of incongruities that largely define the grotesque form is reliant on the abnormal. However, this contrast must be 'between the order of the world of our normal experience and the disorder of the scene we now observe'.<sup>35</sup>

The striking common thread to all of these characteristics is their ambiguity, and the subjectivity involved in such broad descriptions is clear. All of these descriptors- extravagant, exaggerated, normal, abnormal, funny, horrible- are subjective terms. What one generation, or even one person, considers funny or fearful may seem normal to another.

So stand current theories of the grotesque, a term and an aesthetic that is in many ways resistant to definition. Yet the 'fine mist' of grotesque studies may, in fact, be a much more contemporary issue. In seeking the meaning of the grotesque in literary terms, it seems appropriate to return to the early sources, and analyzing the aesthetic from the perspective of Scott and Poe certainly appears to be a logical starting point. Although, as we have seen, Scott did first apply the term to literature in his criticism of Hoffman, too often scholars rely too much on this singular instance of his use of grotesque to understand exactly how Scott understood the aesthetic. Likewise, Poe's collection of short stories entitled *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* is too often overemphasized as a model of understanding how he interpreted the grotesque. Though these works are important in understanding what the grotesque meant to Scott and Poe,

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<sup>34</sup> Harpham, *On the Grotesque*, p. 17.

<sup>35</sup> Jennings, *The Ludicrous Demon*, p. 21.

an exploration of their other works becomes necessary, especially works in which they expand on their understandings of what the grotesque means.

I continue this chapter by examining Scott and Poe's earliest engagements with the grotesque and attempt to determine if, in fact, they shared an understanding of what the grotesque meant. Scholars have conducted little research into the relationship between Scott's meaning of the term and Poe's interpretation of it. Though many scholars are quick to either point to Scott as a source of influence for the grotesque for Poe or, just as often, to discount Scott's influence, most arguments focus on how Scott employed the term in his Hoffman criticism.<sup>36</sup> Largely ignored has been his usage of the expression in his other writings, which would predictably provide much more insight into Scott's understandings of the term grotesque. Examining this relationship more closely will further the understanding of how Scott and Poe viewed the term and what role the grotesque might play in their fictions. Having gained some understanding of how Scott and Poe may define the grotesque, the remainder of this chapter focuses on close readings in order to understand how the grotesque functions in their works of fiction.

### **Engaging with the Grotesque Aesthetic: From Scott to Poe**

In May 1833, Poe sent a letter to Joseph T. and Edwin Buckingham, owners of the *New England Magazine*, containing his short story 'Epimanes' (later known as 'Four Beasts in One'), along with a note expressing his hopes of securing a publication deal. Poe gave the magazine owners the option to publish just this short story or to publish an entire collection that was to be centered on a common narrative framework:

I send you an original tale in hope of your accepting it for the N. E. Magazine. It is one of a number of similar pieces which I have contemplated publishing under the title of "Eleven Tales of the Arabesque". They are supposed to be read at table by the eleven

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<sup>36</sup> Kayser, as well as prominent Poe scholars T.O. Mabbott, Robert T. Tally Jr., and Arthur Hobson Quinn, all agree that Poe borrowed the terms grotesque and arabesque from Scott's review of E. T. A. Hoffman. See Kayser, p. 77; Mabbott, III, p. 474; and Robert Tally, *Poe and the Subversion of American Literature: Satire, Fantasy, Critique* (Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2014), p. 129. On the other hand, Beverly R. Voloshin, Harry Levin, and Burton R. Pollin disagree. See Beverly R. Voloshin, 'The Essays and "Marginalia": Poe's Literary Theory', in *A Companion to Poe Studies*, ed. by Eric W. Carlson (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1996), p. 283; and Harry Levin, *The Power of Blackness: Hawthorne, Poe, Melville* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), p. 101.

members of a literary club, and are followed by the remarks of the company upon each.<sup>37</sup>

The eleven members of Poe's imagined literary club, whose intentions were to 'abolish Literature, subvert the Press, and overturn the Government of Nouns and Pronouns', included characters such as Mr. Convolvulus Gondola, Mr. Blackwood Blackwood, Chronologos Chronology, and 'a stout gentleman who admired Sir Walter Scott',<sup>38</sup> whose names and intentions are obvious allusions to what Poe perceived as an American reverence for British texts. Their comments were 'intended as a burlesque upon criticism'.<sup>39</sup> Poe's postscript in this letter ('P.S. I am poor') leaves little doubt about his desperate financial situation and his need to procure income from publishing this work.<sup>40</sup> Despite his desperate pleas, the *New England Magazine* declined, forcing Poe into a process of revising and editing the collection as a whole to make it more attractive to other potential publishers. Additionally, Poe's need for immediate income forced him to submit several of the stories from the collection to various periodicals, and though *Eleven Tales of the Arabesque* never appeared as a collection, many of the short stories appeared alone in various other magazines and newspapers.

Later that same year, Poe changed the name of the collection to *Tales of the Folio Club* and sought a new publisher. The fact that no table of contents survives has led scholars to speculate on the contents of the *Folio Club*, with many agreeing that sufficient evidence exists that the following nine stories were included in the original eleven: 'The Visionary' ('The Assination'), 'Bon-Bon', 'MS. Found in a Bottle', 'Metzengerstein', 'Loss of Breath', 'The Duke [Duc] de L'Omelette', 'Epimanes' ('Four Beasts in One'), 'Lionizing', and 'Silence'. Scholars have debated as to which of Poe's other tales made up the two stories included in the original eleven, but among the possibilities are 'King Pest', 'A Tale of Jerusalem', 'Raising the Wind', and 'Mystification'.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> LEAP, I, p. 77.

<sup>38</sup> Harrison, VIII, pp. xxxviii–xxxix.

<sup>39</sup> LEAP, I, p. 77.

<sup>40</sup> Comments such as this one from Poe have contributed to readings of the Gothic as a commercial and shallow genre.

<sup>41</sup> See Alexander Hammond, 'Edgar Allan Poe's Tales of the Folio Club: The Evolution of a Lost Book', in *Poe at Work: Seven Textual Studies*, ed. by Benjamin Franklin Fisher IV (Baltimore: The Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore, 1978), pp. 13–43 <<http://www.eapoe.org/papers/psbbooks/pb19781c.htm>> [accessed 9 October 2014]; Alexander Hammond, 'A Reconstruction of Poe's 1833 Tales of the Folio Club, Preliminary Notes', *Poe Studies*, 5.2 (1972), 25–32; Mabbott, II, pp. 200–207; Thomas O. Mabbott, 'On Poe's "Tales of the Folio Club"', *Sewanee Review* (1928), 1271–76; Quinn, pp. 201, 745; and James S. Wilson, 'The Devil Was in It', *American Mercury*, (October 1931), pp. 215–20.

Still unable to secure a publishing deal for the collection, by 1834 Poe had expanded the collection to 16 tales (seventeen at one point) and the publishing house of Carey, Lea, and Blanchard had agreed to publish *The Tales of the Folio Club* as a complete collection. Unfortunately, they held the manuscript for over a year before returning it to Poe unpublished. While waiting for the publication of this work, however, Poe's constant financial struggles led him to write more fiction for publication in various periodicals, including short stories such as 'Berenice' and 'Morella'. Poe sent a copy of 'Berenice' to Thomas W. White, owner of *The Southern Literary Messenger*, where it was first published in March of 1835. However, when White complained to Poe about the overly horrible nature of the story, Poe defended his writing:

The history of all Magazines shows plainly that those which have attained celebrity were indebted for it to articles *similar in nature* — to *Berenice* — although, I grant you, far superior in style and execution. I say similar in *nature*. You ask me in what does this nature consist? In the ludicrous heightened into the grotesque: the fearful coloured into the horrible: the witty exaggerated into the burlesque: the singular wrought out into the strange and mystical.<sup>42</sup>

Poe describes his understanding of what makes a magazine successful- imagination. Of course, as I discuss more thoroughly in the next chapter, it is with this imagination that Poe felt he could influence people, and he regarded the imagination as 'supreme among the mental faculties'.<sup>43</sup> Poe did not simply write, he heightened and colored, exaggerated and wrought out. Yet in later copies of 'Berenice', the author censored the story by removing four of the most graphic paragraphs.

Unable to find a publisher for his *Folio Club*, Poe gave up on the framed narrative he had proposed for it but he maintained his interest in publishing a collection of tales. Nearly five years later, in 1840, publishing house Lea and Blanchard printed *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*, a two-volume set containing 25 stories. *Tales* contains all of the stories that have been attributed to the original *Folio Club*, with the sole exception of 'Raising the Wind'. In addition to those tales, Poe added: 'Morella', 'William Wilson', 'The Man that was Used Up', 'The Fall of the House of Usher', 'The Devil in the Belfry', 'Ligeia', 'The Signora Zenobia', 'The Scythe of Time', 'Hans Phaall', 'Shadow', 'Berenice', 'Why the Little Frenchman Wears His Hand in a Sling', and 'The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion'.<sup>44</sup> This collection of short stories that began in

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<sup>42</sup> *LEAP*, I, p. 84.

<sup>43</sup> Harrison, XIV, p. 187.

<sup>44</sup> Poe, *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*, I.

1833 as an assortment of *arabesques* transformed by 1839 into a collection of *Grotesque and Arabesque* tales. Initially, one might be inclined to assume that the stories that were added to the collection following the change to the title should be considered grotesque tales, which is not necessarily the case. Additionally, the arabesque aesthetic must be considered.

Poe's source(s) for and definition(s) of the terms *grotesque* and *arabesque* have long been contentious for Poe scholars, yet seemingly imperative terms to understand if one is to fully engage with some of his most significant short stories. The confusion surrounding Poe's meaning of these terms is due, in no small part, to his own vague definition. In the preface to *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*, he simply states, 'The epithets "Grotesque" and "Arabesque" will be found to indicate with sufficient precision the prevalent tenor of the tales here published'. The title itself is even somewhat ambiguous; it could mean that the tales are all grotesque and arabesque, perhaps implying a synonymous meaning, or it could be read that some tales are grotesque, while others are arabesque, thus separating the two into distinct categories. In fact, questions remain regarding which of the tales in the collection critics can properly label as arabesques and which ones they should call grotesques.

Further exacerbating the difficulties involved in understanding what exactly Poe meant by these terms are debates concerning the source for Poe's engagement with the grotesque and arabesque in the context of literary aesthetics. Many scholars, but certainly not all, agree with Quinn's assertion that Poe borrowed the terms grotesque and arabesque from Sir Walter Scott's essay 'On the Supernatural in Fictitious Composition',<sup>45</sup> a work in which Scott criticizes Hoffman and seemingly derides the supernatural in what he terms 'FANTASTIC' German literature:

The attachment of the Germans to the mysterious has invented another species of composition, which, perhaps, could hardly have made its way in any other country or language. This may be called the FANTASTIC mode of writing, -in which the most wild and unbounded license is given to an irregular fancy, and all species of combination, however ludicrous, or however shocking, are attempted and executed without scruple. [...] Sudden transformations are introduced of the most extraordinary kind, and wrought by the most inadequate means; no attempt is made to soften their absurdity, or to reconcile their inconsistencies.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Quinn, p. 289.

<sup>46</sup> Sir Walter Scott, 'The Supernatural in Fictitious Composition', p. 72.

Scott's comments on Hoffman's works underscore one of the most significant differences between Scott and Poe, one that concerns imagination. While Poe heightens, exaggerates, and colors his narratives, Scott derides a fantastic imagination that can only be achieved through the absence of scruples. Scott further criticizes the fantastic imagination when he speaks of Hoffman himself:

Thus was the inventor, or at least first distinguished artist who exhibited the fantastic or supernatural grotesque in his compositions, so nearly on the verge of actual insanity, as to be afraid of the beings his own fancy created. In fact, the grotesque in his compositions partly resembles the arabesque in painting, in which is introduced the most strange and complicated monsters, resembling centaurs, griffins, sphinxes, chimeras, rocs, and all other creatures of the romantic imagination.<sup>47</sup>

Scott viewed Hoffman's fantastic imagination as a fault. In fact, so imaginative was Hoffman that Scott suggests he was near insanity.

In the passage quoted above, Scott does not separate the grotesque and the arabesque in terms of opposite aesthetics. Instead, he suggests that they are nearly the same thing, with the arabesque referring to the visual arts and the grotesque applied to literature. Many scholars, including Kayser, refer to this passage when suggesting that Scott viewed the grotesque and arabesque as nearly synonymous. Kayser asserts that Poe not only got the aesthetics terms from Scott, but he also uses them synonymously like Scott:

It is probably in emulation of Walter Scott, who may have transmitted the word and the concept of the grotesque to him, that Poe uses grotesque and arabesque synonymously in the title of his collection.<sup>48</sup>

Beverly R. Voloshin disagrees, suggesting that since Scott saw the grotesque as the 'literary counterpart to the arabesque in the visual arts' and that because Scott uses the term grotesque to deride the supernatural, 'his valuation of the terms cannot be precisely that of Poe'.<sup>49</sup> Both Harry Levin and Burton R. Pollin suggest an alternate source for Poe: the preface to Victor Hugo's *Cromwell*.<sup>50</sup> Hugo writes, 'the grotesque [...] is found everywhere; on the one hand, it creates the abnormal and the horrible, on the other the

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., pp. 81–82.

<sup>48</sup> Kayser, p. 77.

<sup>49</sup> Voloshin, 'The Essays and "Marginalia": Poe's Literary Theory', p. 283.

<sup>50</sup> Levin, pp. 101–64; Burton R. Pollin, *Discoveries in Poe* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970), p. 15.



comic and the burlesque'. Hugo caustically criticized classicists for largely ignoring the dark side of human nature. 'The real results from the wholly natural combination of two types, the sublime and the grotesque, which meet in the drama, as they meet in life and in creation'.<sup>51</sup>

Voloshin and others base their arguments that Poe did not borrow the terms grotesque and arabesque from Scott primarily on two premises, and both rely on Scott's comments in his Hoffman review. The first is that Scott viewed the literary grotesque as 'unnatural, startling, and repugnant', while Poe embraced the grotesque form.<sup>52</sup> There are difficulties with this argument. First, let us assume for the moment, as Voloshin and others have done, that Scott did indeed have a low opinion of the grotesque, as his Hoffman criticism certainly seems to suggest. Scott's criticism of Hoffman's overwrought imagination and his derision of the grotesque in that review do not necessarily suggest that Scott and Poe did not value the term similarly. To be more accurate, just because Poe embraced the grotesque in his own works does not necessarily mean that he did not view the grotesque the same as Scott. As I pointed out earlier, there is a fundamental difference between Scott and Poe in terms of imagination. We return to the idea here of Scott's contention that only an author who lacks scruples can properly work out the fantastic. Indeed, Poe felt little moral or ethical obligation that would prevent him from employing the repugnant. Even if one is to concede that Scott detested the grotesque literary aesthetic, this does not necessarily mean that Scott and Poe valued the term differently.

On the other hand, Voloshin and others have based Scott's negative valuation of the grotesque solely on his review of Hoffman. Though it seems clear in that particular work that Scott did indeed have some reservations about the use of the supernatural and the grotesque in fiction writing, we should not assume, based on this one example, that Scott had an absolute disdain for the grotesque. In fact, I think there is much confusion surrounding what Scott meant by grotesque, as I will soon demonstrate. If Scott's condemnation of a grotesque German fantastic literature is to be taken seriously, we

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<sup>51</sup> Victor Hugo, 'Preface to Cromwell', in *Prefaces and Prologues: To Famous Books*, ed. by Charles W. Eliot, The Harvard Classics, 50 vols (New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1909), xxxix, paras. 3, 60 of 143 <<http://www.bartleby.com/br/03901.html>> [accessed 3 May 2017].

<sup>52</sup> Voloshin, p. 283.

must reconcile the use of this aesthetic in his own fictions, such as in ‘Wandering Willie’s Tale’ in *Redgauntlet*, where Willie tells of Steenie Steenson’s trip to hell to recover a rent receipt<sup>53</sup>, and ‘The Fortunes of Martin Waldeck’ from *The Antiquary*, where Martin encounters a goblin in a German forest<sup>54</sup>. There is also Fergus MacIvor’s ‘Bodach Glas’ in *Waverley*<sup>55</sup>, the ‘White Lady of Avenel’ from *The Monastery*<sup>56</sup>, ‘Beelzebub’s postmistress’ Meg Merrilies in *Guy Mannering*<sup>57</sup>, and Norna of the Fitful-Head in *The Pirate*<sup>58</sup>, just to name a few examples of Scott’s supernatural grotesqueries that are further explored later in this chapter.

The second premise on which Voloshin and other critics rely to discount Scott’s aesthetic influence on Poe is Scott’s seemingly synonymous usage of the terms grotesque and arabesque, whereas Poe distinguishes them as two separate categories. Again, this argument also has difficulties in that it relies solely on Scott’s Hoffman review, ignoring all of his other writings in which the grotesque and arabesque are discussed. For example, an 1808 letter from Scott to his friend John Bacon Sawrey Morritt indicates that Scott had different concepts of the terms well prior to his Hoffman criticism:

The ornaments on Bishop Bell’s tomb, which I have this morning received your draught of, are very curious, and certainly shew some resemblance to those in Strathmore. But there is this essential difference, that in the Bishop’s case they seem to have been merely an arabesque border on which the artist doubtless exercised his own fancy; whereas upon the stones they stand in place of all sort of inscription or sepulchral notice whatever, and are therefore in the latter case the principal, whereas upon the tomb of the Bishop I conceive them only to be accessories. The disposition of the Gothic artists of every kind bordered on the grotesque; they carved upon every coign, buttress, and point of vantage over and over with the wildest forms their imagination could suggest.<sup>59</sup>

What Scott is referring to here is the medieval tomb of Richard Bell, Bishop of Carlisle Cathedral, who died in 1496. A Latin inscription is engraved along a narrow strip of

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<sup>53</sup> *EEWN*, xvii, pp. 87-102.

<sup>54</sup> *EEWN*, iii, pp. 137–146.

<sup>55</sup> *EEWN*, i, p. 294.

<sup>56</sup> *EEWN*, ix.

<sup>57</sup> *EEWN*, ii, p. 282.

<sup>58</sup> *EEWN*, xii.

<sup>59</sup> Walter Scott to John Morritt, 15 October 1808, National Library of Scotland, MS 853, fols 1-3; *LSWS*, ii, pp. 96–97.

inlaid brass that runs around the cover of the tomb and mixed between some of the Latin words are engravings of a variety of animals. This brass strip is what Scott refers to as an ‘arabesque border’. He is comparing the arabesque ‘accessories’ inscribed into the brass to the eighteenth-century changes Gothic artists made to Glamis Castle in Strathmore.<sup>60</sup> Scott clearly differentiates the grotesque and the arabesque here, with the former being an excess of the latter. Additionally, even in the passage from the Hoffman criticism that is so often referred to by critics claiming that Scott meant the grotesque and arabesque synonymously, Scott explicitly makes the point that they are only partly alike.

Scott’s objection to Hoffman is not so much his use of the supernatural, but that the author’s imagination has ‘carried him too far “extra moenia flammantia mundi,” too much beyond the circle of not only the probable but the possible’.<sup>61</sup> Scott’s attitude here, of course, also underscores how I defined both ‘Gothic’ and ‘Gothic imagination’ in the introduction to this research. Scott goes on to say, ‘[T]he supernatural in fictitious composition requires to be managed with considerable delicacy’, and its overuse will cause it to lose its power. Scott quotes Edmund Burke and the ‘Book of Job’ as ‘sublime and decisive authorities’ who prove that ‘the exhibition of supernatural appearances in fictitious narrative ought to be rare, brief, indistinct’. These are hardly examples of overwrought imaginations. For Scott, the supernatural is best employed when it is ‘dark, uncertain, confused, and terrible’. Here, he subscribes to Burke’s contention, ‘To make anything very terrible, obscurity seems in general to be necessary’.<sup>62</sup> In fact, this is the opposite of Poe, who thought popular literature required a coloring of the text, a heightening, from the ludicrous to the grotesque, from the fearful to the terrible. For Scott, Burke’s supernatural is appealing because of the ‘uncertainty of strokes and colouring’. If Hoffman had constrained his overwrought imagination in his supernatural literature, he would have been much more successful:

Hoffman seems to have been a man of excellent disposition, a close observer of nature, and one who, if this sickly and disturbed train of thought had not confounded the supernatural with the absurd, would

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<sup>60</sup> John Morritt to Sir Walter Scott, 10 October 1808, National Library of Scotland, MS 3877, fols 151-54.

<sup>61</sup> Scott, ‘Supernatural’, p. 93.

<sup>62</sup> Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1757), p. 43.

have distinguished himself as a painter of human nature, of which in its realities he was an observer and an admirer.<sup>63</sup>

Scott suggests that the grotesque is the product of an overwrought imagination, an exaggeration of the arabesque. Though Scott did exaggerate the supernatural to the absurd, the supernatural in his fictions appears much less frequently than in Hoffman's works, or, in fact, in Poe's works. However, there are still many examples of the supernatural and the grotesque form throughout Scott's novels.

Another point to consider when examining Scott's aesthetic tenets is that if Scott did in fact have a distaste for the grotesque and meant for the grotesque and the arabesque to be synonymous terms, as some have argued, his distaste for the grotesque would necessarily mean an aversion to the arabesque, which does not seem to be the case, at least not in his own fictions, such as in *The Fair Maid of Perth*:

Thus reflecting, he reached the top of a swelling green hill, and saw the splendid vision of Loch Tay lying beneath him—an immense plate of polished silver, its dark heathy mountains and leafless thickets of oak serving as an arabesque frame to a magnificent mirror.<sup>64</sup>

In this passage, Scott refers to the arabesque as dark and leafless, but it adds to the overall beauty of the scene. Another example of Scott referring to the arabesque in positive terms can be found in *The Talisman*:

But we cannot stop to describe the cloth of gold and silver—the superb embroidery in arabesque—the shawls of Kashmere and the muslins of India, which were here unfolded in all their splendour.<sup>65</sup>

Here Scott describes the excellent arabesque needlework that adds to the beauty of the shawls and muslins. Likewise, in *Quentin Durward*, Scott writes:

The Count of Crevecoeur, a renowned and undaunted warrior, entered the apartment; and, contrary to the usage among the envoys of friendly powers, he appeared all armed, excepting his head, in a gorgeous suit of the most superb Milan armor, made of steel, inlaid and embossed with gold, which was wrought into the fantastic taste called the Arabesque.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Scott, 'Supernatural', pp. 63, 62, 82. Scott quotes Burke quoting Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Book II, 666-673. He also quotes Job 4.12-16, 'Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ears received a little thereof. In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, fear came upon me, and trembling which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face: the hair of my flesh stood up. It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes; there was silence, and I heard a voice'.

<sup>64</sup> *EEWN*, XXI, p. 280.

<sup>65</sup> *EEWN*, XVIIb, p. 272.

<sup>66</sup> *EEWN*, XV, p. 103.

The Count in this scene is wearing armor fashioned in an arabesque style, which Scott describes as ‘gorgeous’. Scott certainly does not seem to have a distaste for the arabesque in his fiction. In fact, these passages demonstrate that he had a very positive view of the arabesque. This viewpoint is also evident in his poetry:

Of strange tradition many a mystic trace,  
Legend and vision, prophecy and sign;  
Where wonders wild of Arabesque combine  
With Gothic imagery of darker shade,  
Forming a model meet for minstrel line.<sup>67</sup>

In this passage from *The Vision of Don Roderick*, Scott again refers to the arabesque in positive terms. This passage also underscores the difference between Scott’s and Poe’s concepts of imagination yet again. Scott does not employ the fantastic; he relies instead on legends and visions, prophecies and signs. Nonetheless, the above passages from his novels and his poetry all seem to suggest that Scott greatly appreciated and even admired the arabesque. Both his novels as well as his poetry contain similar passages that overwhelmingly suggests that he valued the arabesque. In fact, there is even more direct evidence that indicates that Scott was not dogmatically opposed to the grotesque at all.

Not all of Scott’s writings view the grotesque as a completely undesirable aesthetic form. For example, in his early poem *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, in Canto II Scott writes:

The corbells were carved grotesque and grim:  
And the pillars, with clustered shafts so trim,  
With base and with capital flourished around,  
Seemed bundles of lances which garlands had bound.<sup>68</sup>

Scott here is describing Melrose Abbey, a place he loved and admired for its beauty. The corbels were grotesque and grim, but this grotesque added to the beauty of the abbey. At least occasionally, Scott regarded the grotesque in a positive way, but he also recognized that the grotesque had a humorous or comic aspect. According to Lockhart, when he asked Scott if he liked the novel *The Bride of Lammermoor*, Scott replied, ‘As a whole, I felt it monstrous gross and grotesque; but still the worst of it made me laugh’.<sup>69</sup> Scott certainly did not have a dogmatic aversion to the grotesque, a fact to which a tour of his

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<sup>67</sup> Sir Walter Scott, *The Vision of Don Roderick: A Poem*. (Edinburgh and London: John Ballantyne and Co.; and Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1811), Introduction, XII, ll. 3–7.

<sup>68</sup> Scott, *Lay*, Canto Two, IX, ll. 7–10.

<sup>69</sup> Lockhart, IV, p. 275.

estate at Abbotsford will attest, adorned as it is with grotesque architectural accessories. Of course, these adornments are visual grotesques, which is relevant.

Though both Scott and Poe refer to the grotesque in terms of a literary aesthetic, it is also appropriate that Scott is referring to the visual arts in his letter to Morritt and in his Hoffman criticism, as critical arguments surrounding the meaning of grotesque and arabesque have generally centered on defining the terms in relation to aesthetics in the visual arts and then translating those definitions into literary terms. Both of the terms grotesque and arabesque are rooted in the visual arts, and the *Encyclopædia Americana* of 1838 defined them in that context:

Grotesques, in painting, are often confounded with arabesques. [...] but there is a distinction between them. Arabesques are flowerpieces, consisting of all kinds of leaves and flowers, real or imaginary. They are so called from the Arabians, who first used them, because they were not permitted to copy beasts and men [...]. The Romans ornamented their saloons with paintings, in which flowers, genii, men and beasts, buildings, &c, are mingled together according to the fancy of the artist. These ornaments are properly called grotesques, because they were found in the ruined buildings of the ancient Romans, and in subterranean chambers, which the Italians call grottoes.<sup>70</sup>

In his important collection of Poe's works, Mabbott also defines the terms in the context of the visual arts: 'Grotesque decoration (so called as found in ancient grottoes, as the Italians termed excavations) combines plant, animal, and human motifs. Arabesque uses only flowers and calligraphy'.<sup>71</sup> The definitions put forth by the *Encyclopædia Americana* and Mabbott certainly do not seem to be precisely the description Scott had in mind in his 1808 letter to Moffitt, in which he describes the 'arabesque' animal engravings on Bishop Bell's tomb. Nor does this idea seem to be what Scott meant in his Hoffman criticism, where he describes arabesque paintings that 'introduce monsters'. Poe, however, appears to have accepted this definition in his 'Philosophy of Furniture':

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<sup>70</sup> Francis Lieber, E. Wigglesworth, and T. G. Bradford, *Encyclopædia Americana: A Popular Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, Literature, History, Politics, and Biography*, New Edition, 14 vols (Philadelphia: Thomas, Cowperthwait, & Co., 1838), VI, pp. 72–73.

<sup>71</sup> Mabbott, II, p. 474, n. 1. Also see G. R. Thompson, 'The Arabesque Design of Arthur Gordon Pym', in *Poe's Pym: Critical Explorations*, ed. by Richard Kopley (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992), pp. 188–216; and Patricia C. Smith, 'Poe's Arabesque', *Poe Studies - Old Series*, 7.2 (1974), 42–45 <<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1754-6095.1974.tb00235.x>> [accessed 2 January 2019].

The abomination of flowers, or representations of well-known objects of any kind, should never be endured within the limits of Christendom. Indeed, whether on carpets, or curtains, or paper-hangings, or ottoman coverings, all upholstery of this nature should be rigidly Arabesque.<sup>72</sup>

In visual art, according to Poe, flowers represent the arabesque.

As the grotesque and the arabesque were applied as aesthetics in the visual arts, the terms were seldom used synonymously, and Scott did not mean the terms to be synonymous, nor, I think, does Poe. Quinn suggests that ‘generally speaking, the Arabesques are the product of powerful imagination and the Grotesques have a burlesque or satirical quality’.<sup>73</sup> Voloshin agrees, generally, with Quinn’s assessment, but elaborates on what the terms meant to Poe:

For Poe, the grotesque and arabesque characterize different literary modes, the grotesque designating the comic, burlesque, and satiric, and the arabesque the serious, poetic, terrifying, and visionary.<sup>74</sup>

Yet Poe’s originally titled collection *Eleven Tales of the Arabesque*, a collection he had written and titled some time prior to 1833, which he meant to be ‘burlesque[s] upon criticism’, superficially belies the theories concerning the literary modes of the grotesque and arabesque put forth by Quinn, Voloshin, and others. The title and the obviously humorous and satiric nature of this collection suggest the exact opposite, that Poe meant for the arabesques to be humorous and satirical, and, we can only assume, the grotesques to be serious and terrifying. Yet by the time Poe had written to White in defense of ‘Berenice’ in 1835, suggesting that short stories must extend ‘the ludicrous to the grotesque’ in order to be popular, Poe seems to have changed his idea of what the terms meant. This appears to be the same definition that Scott had in mind in his Hoffman criticism of 1827; the grotesque was an exaggeration of the horrible (the arabesque) to the point that it developed a humorous aspect. By the time Poe had renamed his collection *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* and written the preface, where he notes the ‘prevalence of the “Arabesque”’ in his ‘serious tales’, this new belief was well ensconced. Many modern scholars of Poe attribute to the arabesque characteristics such as bizarre, complicated, serious, poetic, terrifying, and visionary, while the grotesque is comic, burlesque, satiric, horrifically unfamiliar, and weird.

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<sup>72</sup> Mabbott, II, p. 497.

<sup>73</sup> Quinn, p. 289.

<sup>74</sup> Voloshin, p. 283.

There is certainly no reason to believe that Poe's engagement with the grotesque and arabesque was limited to any one source, and it is likely that he had been exposed to the terms from a variety of different texts. Even though there is no way to be certain as to when and where Poe got the idea of the grotesque and arabesque as literary aesthetic terms, there is ample evidence, I believe, to support the theory that Scott's criticism of Hoffman was at least one source for Poe's usage of the terms. Poe was well aware of the negative criticism the supernatural in German fiction had received, writing in the preface to *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*:

I am led to think it is this prevalence of the 'Arabesque' in my serious tales, which has induced one or two critics to tax me, in all friendliness, with what they have been pleased to term 'Germanism' and gloom. The charge is in bad taste, and the grounds of the accusation have not been sufficiently considered. If in many of my productions terror has been the thesis, I maintain that terror is not of Germany, but of the soul, — that I have deduced this terror only from its legitimate sources, and urged it only to its legitimate results.<sup>75</sup>

Mabbott's exhaustive research has discovered only one instance of Poe's contemporaries criticizing his work as Germanic, and it seems unlikely that this single criticism evoked a response from Poe in the preface to a collection of short stories he had been trying for so long to publish. Though there is no way of determining whether Poe was conscious of Scott's Hoffman criticism or not, that Poe defended his works from being labeled 'German' suggests that either he was aware that the literature he was writing was tied to German fiction, or, at the very least, that he thought others felt as if his works were rooted in German Romanticism, the same fantastic German Romanticism that Scott had criticized. Yet despite Poe's insistence that his work does not fall under the influence of German fantasy literature, the title page to *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* bears a quotation from the German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's fantasy poem entitled 'My Goddess', in which the immortal goddess of Fantasy has attained the highest possible reward.<sup>76</sup>

Since the publication of Poe's collection of grotesque and arabesque tales, the two terms have experienced opposing trajectories. The arabesque is a term seldom employed by modern theorists outside the circle of Poe scholarship. The grotesque, on the other

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<sup>75</sup> Harrison, II, p. 473.

<sup>76</sup> Poe quotes Goethe in German, 'Seltsamen tochter Jovis/ Seinem Schosskinde/ Der *Phantasie*', which translates as, 'Dearest in her father's eye / Jove's own darling / Phantasy' in 'Life and Genius of Goethe'. See Mabbott, I, p. 118.



hand, seems largely to have become a hackneyed term whose definition has become too imprecise for us to consider it an operative critical tool. However, it seems clear that Scott and Poe were more decisive and had similar ideas of what the grotesque and arabesque meant. Arabesques are works that the authors intend to be serious without humor, while grotesques are arabesques exaggerated to the point where they become funny or ridiculously humorous. With this understanding, we are able to investigate several ways in which the grotesque functions in the literature from Scott and Poe.

### **The Gothic Grotesque**

As I will discuss in detail in the next chapter, many of Scott's novels work towards a reconciliation of old-world values and new world progress, towards creating and defining a unique Scottish national character that still manages to fit comfortably within the wider identity of the United Kingdom. Such reconciliations, whether they be Norman and Saxon, English and Scottish, 'aristocratic oppression and embittered peasantry',<sup>77</sup> are seldom without anxieties and uncertainties. The grotesque, in this sense, offers yet another tool for discussing and perhaps relieving at least some of these tensions. Scott's use of the grotesque in this respect can perhaps be adequately demonstrated in the minor but complicated character David Gellatley from his first novel *Waverley*. Davie, as this character is known, has gained patronage from the Jacobite sympathizer Cosmo Comyne Bradwardine, the Baron of Bradwardine, after saving the life of his daughter Rose. The Baron has recognized that Davie risked his own life to save Rose, and to show his appreciation he insists, 'the roguish loon must therefore eat of our bread and drink of our cup, and do what he can, or what he will'. Because the Baron feels indebted to the young man, Davie has the freedom to do as he pleases, which, in fact, is very little. His laziness has earned him the unfavorable monikers 'Davie Do little' and 'Davie Do-naething'. In a physical sense, he is indeed grotesque. His countenance resembles 'the face on the bole of a German tobacco pipe'. However, Davie's grotesqueness is much more complicated than mere physical appearances. On the one hand, the other characters consider him a fool, 'not much unlike one of Shakespeare's roynish clowns', and he is referred to as 'Daft Davie'. He certainly dresses clownishly, wearing a scarlet outfit and a scarlet bonnet 'proudly surmounted with a turkey's feather'. The narrator describes Davie:

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<sup>77</sup> Andrew Lincoln, *Walter Scott and Modernity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p. 196.

David Gellatley was in good earnest the half-crazed simpleton which he appeared, and was incapable of any constant and steady exertion. He had just so much solidity as kept on the windy side of insanity, so much wild wit as saved him from the imputation of idiocy, some dexterity in field-sports (in which we have known as great fools excel), great kindness and humanity in the treatment of animals entrusted to him, warm affections, a prodigious memory, and an ear for music.<sup>78</sup>

Scott humorously portrays Davie as nearly insane (much as he did Hoffman). On the other hand, however, Scott presents Davie as a being in possession of a cunning mind, even feared on some level. Waverley recognizes this in Davie, and he finds in him ‘neither idiocy nor insanity’ but ‘the simplicity of the fool was mixed with the extravagance of a crazed imagination’. Of course, it was a wild imagination that Scott had criticized in Hoffman and his grotesque works. The villagers had also suggested that Davie was not such a fool as he wanted everyone to believe, that he ‘was no farther fool than was necessary to avoid hard labour’. His mother insists that ‘Davie's no sae silly as folk tak him for, [...] Davie's no just like other folk, puir fallow; but he's no sae silly as folk tak him for’. Indeed, Davie’s fantastic imagination is beyond the understanding of most of the characters in the novel. He was somewhat of a riddle that most people wrote off as merely an idiot, a ‘poor fool’, an ‘innocent’, a ‘simpleton’. Yet Davie’s contemporaries also somewhat fear him, partly due to his unpredictable and often unusual emotional state, and partly due to his family history. They thought he was excitable at the prospect of commotion or unrest, ‘His spirits always rose with anything, good or bad, which occasioned tumult’. But he was much more feared because of the fact that his mother had at one point been accused of and imprisoned for being a witch, ‘on the infallible grounds that she was very old, very ugly, very poor, and had two sons, one of whom was a poet and the other a fool’. Janet, Davie’s mother, had cunningly managed to extricate herself from the punishments that typically befell those of that ilk. Davie’s mother recognized a similar cunningness in her son: ‘I daur say, Mr. Wauverley, ye never kend that a' the eggs that were sae weel roasted at supper in the Ha'-house were aye turned by our Davie?’ Though the narrator suggests that Davie seems to confute the

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<sup>78</sup> *EEWN*, I, pp. 42, 41, 60, 58.

proverb ‘there goes reason to roasting of eggs’,<sup>79</sup> his mother views Davie as its testament, that regardless of how strange her son behaves, there is an underlying reason he is behaving that way.<sup>80</sup>

Though motherly praises can be rather misleading, Davie, who, at least in some ways, Scott presents as the grotesque village idiot, possesses one unique trait that cannot be ignored; he is a warehouse of traditional Scottish folk culture. He continuously sings tunes steeped in Scottish tradition, which places the character in a unique light. On the one hand, the ‘old Scottish ditt[ies]’ which he sings ‘with great earnestness, and not without some taste’ represent a clinging to or respect for traditional Scottish history, values, and culture. On the other hand, saving the life of Rose and accepting the favor of the Baron of Bradwardine represents the approval of the rationalities of a modern post-Union culture. In other words, Davie stands for the bearer of a traditional Scottish torch while at the same time the deliverer of modern post-Union sensibilities as exemplified by the rational and level-headed Rose. While most of the novel's characters are dogmatic in their political beliefs, Edward Waverley ‘waves’ his allegiance between Flora and the Jacobite cause, and Rose and the Hanoverian regime. All the while, Davie provides the reassuring middle ground where the ‘colorful, passionate past’ is taken more seriously, and the ‘rational, realistic present of post-Union Scotland’<sup>81</sup> becomes less feared. The tension between the past and present that Scott eases here mirrors the grotesque characteristics of Davie. In other words, his humorous dress, his passionate singing, and his colorful tales lessen the fear of a volatile Davie and his relationship to the supernatural. Likewise, Scott eases the fear of an uncertain future for Scotland in Union with England by looking at her humorous ‘colorful, passionate past’. I will discuss the politics that Scott underscores in scenes such as this in much more detail in the following chapter, but note that the grotesque is employed here to ease the tensions of an uncertain political future for Scotland and to show the possibilities and positive ramifications of a middle ground.

The use of the grotesque to comment on political tensions is common in the works of both Scott and Poe, but another of their favorite targets is social relationships. An

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., pp.41, 58, 320-21, 317, 319.

<sup>80</sup> ‘There Is Reason in the Roasting of Eggs - Oxford Reference’  
<<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199539536.001.0001/acref-9780199539536-e-1814>> [accessed 4 June 2015].

<sup>81</sup> ‘Waverley’, *The University of Edinburgh Library Walter Scott Digital Archive*  
<<http://www.walterscott.lib.ed.ac.uk/works/novels/waverley.html>> [accessed 8 June 2015].

excellent example of how the grotesque is employed to criticize American aristocracy can readily be found in Poe's short story 'King Pest'. This narrative is set during the fourteenth century when a plague was sweeping through London. Even though Poe sets the story in the United Kingdom, he is unquestionably criticizing American values, a point that I will elaborate on in the following chapter. 'King Pest' centers on two sailors who flee from a local bar when they realize they cannot afford to pay their bar tab. In their escape, they accidentally enter an area of the city that had been quarantined because the plague had enveloped the area, and they go into a building that was previously the shop of an undertaker. As they enter the shop, they find six strange people in the room. The narrator describes each of the six grotesque characters in detail. The sixth character is described:

Fronting him, sixthly and lastly, was situated a singularly stiff-looking personage, who, being afflicted with paralysis, must, to speak seriously, have felt very ill at ease in his unaccommodating habiliments.

This passage begins with a morbid vision of a man who has paralysis, extremely uncomfortable because he is apparently inappropriately clothed. There is certainly no indication that the reader is meant to take what follows to be humorous. In fact, Poe insists that the observations of the narrator are to be taken 'seriously'. Yet as the passage continues, Poe heightens the ludicrous into the grotesque:

He was habited, somewhat uniquely, in a new and handsome mahogany coffin. Its top or head-piece pressed upon the skull of the wearer, and extended over it in the fashion of a hood, giving to the entire face an air of indescribable interest. Arm-holes had been cut in the sides, for the sake not more of elegance than of convenience; but the dress, nevertheless, prevented its proprietor from sitting as erect as his associates; and as he lay reclining against his tressel, at an angle of forty-five degrees, a pair of huge goggle eyes rolled up their awful whites towards the ceiling in absolute amazement at their own enormity.<sup>82</sup>

This passage obviously has a humorous vein, but Poe juxtaposes the humor with the horrible. The casket itself is a symbol of death, and the 'stiff-looking' person 'wearing' it suffers from paralysis, certainly not a laughing matter. The lid of the coffin is crushing his skull, and his eyes are bulging. Yet Poe places these horrific circumstances in a humorous light, and it is this grotesque clash of humor and disgust or even horror that forces the reader to reexamine this unusual scene. It is through this reexamination that it

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<sup>82</sup> Harrison, II, p. 248.

becomes evident that Poe employs the grotesque aesthetic form here to mock American aristocracy. Mahogany is an exotic wood that is imported from the West Indies or Central America, and items crafted from mahogany in the first half of the nineteenth century in America became symbols of wealth and power.<sup>83</sup> A mahogany coffin in nineteenth-century America would have been available to only the wealthiest of citizens. Poe's grotesque aristocrat, however, has become paralyzed, and his status of wealth serves him now only as an uncomfortable dress. The coffin now constrains the man, denying him the dignity to sit as erect as his associates. The once elegant and exotic coffin has been carved and chopped to accommodate the arms of its wearer. The character's own status symbol now works to torture the man, slowly crushing his skull, and he has no means to extricate himself. The coffin lid resembles a hood, a typical headpiece for women and infants in the nineteenth century, which further feminizes or infantilizes and incapacitates the symbol of American aristocracy. Poe's character seems to have realized the ramifications of his aristocratic values, albeit too late to change, as he looks up with large eyes realizing their own enormity, realizing that despite his wealth and power, he has been buried alive.

Another of Poe's stories in which he criticizes American aristocracy through the grotesque aesthetic is 'Mask of the Red Death'. This narrative unfolds in the castle of Prince Prospero in an undefined location during the time a gruesome plague had gripped the region. Prospero and a number of nobles have taken refuge inside the castle and largely ignored the effects the plague has had on the population outside of the castle walls. The prince holds a masquerade ball inside the castle while death and suffering grip those outside.<sup>84</sup> The story thematically is a grotesque, with the juxtaposition of a masquerade ball and grueling and suffering death, the comic clashing with the horrible.<sup>85</sup> Poe begins the story by describing the disease in awful terms: 'pestilence', 'hideous', 'fatal', 'horror'. In the next paragraph, he describes the 'happy' Prince and his 'light-

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<sup>83</sup> Jennifer L. Anderson traces mahogany as a commodity and status symbol throughout both America and the United Kingdom from the mid eighteenth to mid nineteenth centuries in Jennifer L. Anderson, *Mahogany: The Costs of Luxury in Early America* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2012).

<sup>84</sup> Mabbott, II, p. 675.

<sup>85</sup> Ironically, in reviewing *Life of Petrarch* by Thomas Campbell, Poe writes the following criticism: 'We observe, also, far more serious defects — defects of *tone*. These sentences, for instance, are in shockingly bad taste, — "The most skilful physicians stood aghast at this disease (the plague). The charlatan rejoiced at it, unless it *attacked himself*, because it put quackery on a par with skill; and compassionate women assisted both *physicians and quacks in doing no good to their patients* [...]. *This was a dance of the king of terrors over the earth, and a very rapid one*". Attempts at humor on such subjects are always exceedingly low'. See 'Review of New Books', *Graham's Magazine* (September 1841), 142-143 (p. 143).

hearted' courtiers as they lock themselves within the castle to escape the devastation of the plague. Locked safely behind their walls, 'it was folly' for the aristocracy to 'grieve, or to think'. As Prospero's festivities continue through the night, the chiming of the clock each hour strikes fear in the revelers, and they momentarily freeze. The fading of the chimes is followed by laughter, then the party resumes. It is when the clock slowly strikes twelve bells that 'more of thought crept, with more of time, into the meditations of the thoughtful among those who reveled'.

One of Poe's concerns here is that Americans do not think before they either lend support to or criticize a cause or an action. The next chapter will demonstrate that Poe was concerned with an egalitarian democracy in which the lower classes of society were given a voice in government despite their lack of education and understanding of politics, but here, Poe insists that it is not only the uneducated and poor who lack the ability to make good decisions, it is the aristocracy as well. Of course, aristocracy in America was reserved for the wealthy, and Poe thought little of American aristocracy that was based on money. In 'The Philosophy of Furniture', he writes:

We have no aristocracy of blood, and having, therefore, as a natural and, indeed as an inevitable thing, fashioned for ourselves an aristocracy of dollars, the *display of wealth* has here to take the place, and perform the office, of the heraldic display in monarchical countries. It is an evil growing out of our republican institutions, that here a man of large purse has usually a very little soul which he keeps in it.<sup>86</sup>

Poe dreamt of an aristocracy of intellect. 'Would it *not* be "glorious", *darling*', he wrote to Sarah Whitman, 'to establish, in America, the sole unquestionable aristocracy — that of intellect?'<sup>87</sup> Poe's criticism of Americans who are thoughtlessly led by others is echoed in several of his stories, including 'The System of Doctor Tarr and Professor Fether', which is discussed in detail later in this chapter.

The 'voluptuous' atmosphere of the ball in Prince Prospero's castellated abbey in 'Red Death' stages the carnivalesque on which Bakhtin draws his conceptions of the grotesque. The ball is reminiscent of the fairs and celebrations of the Middle Ages, where the revelry allows the partygoers to forget, at least temporarily, the everyday problems they face. Bakhtin suggests that the appeal of this atmosphere is that it equalizes and liberates, where class differences and religious preferences are irrelevant.

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<sup>86</sup> Mabbott, II, p. 496

<sup>87</sup> *LEAP*, II, p. 735.

However, it is not Poe's carnival atmosphere that does the equalizing in this story. In fact, Poe's masquerade ball does exactly the opposite by serving as a symbol of the segregation of the nobility and the peasantry. The equalizer in Poe's story is death itself. It would certainly be erroneous to suggest that the horrible plays only a minor role here. In fact, it is also precisely the horrors of death surrounding the aristocracy that underscores their cruel treatment of the peasantry.

The carnival atmosphere in 'Mask of the Red Death' is also similar to the setting in another of Poe's stories, 'The Cask of Amontillado', where Fortunato's festive outfit points towards a festival. In that story, Fortunato 'wore motley. He had on a tight-fitting parti-striped dress, and his head was surmounted by the conical cap and bells'. Fortunato, it will be remembered, becomes entombed in the walls in the maze of catacombs under Montresor's home.<sup>88</sup> Like 'Mask of the Red Death', critics have also read 'The Cask of Amontillado' as a critique of class structure. Elena Baraban, for example, suggests that Montresor's motive for murdering Fortunato lies in the fact that although Montresor possesses a superior aristocratic lineage, he is not as wealthy nor as powerful as his 'fortunate' nemesis. Montresor, because of his noble heritage, must not allow someone from a lesser social status to insult him. In this reading, one can see Fortunato's murder as a duty that Montresor must perform.<sup>89</sup> In this sense, Poe is also underscoring the ridiculousness of social constructs of hierarchy.

In 'Mask of the Red Death', the reader is confronted with the revelry and humor of the masqueraders and the brutality and horror of the suffering dead. The Prince and the nobles with whom he surrounds himself feel as if they are immune to the torments and problems of the commoner. They believe that their power and money can prevent them from facing the realities and the devastation of the plague that grips the lower classes on the other side of their walls. Presenting the masqueraders as grotesques further equalize class differences, an equalization that Poe underscores in the final sentence in the short story, 'And Darkness and Decay and the Red Death held illimitable dominion over all'. In death, we are all equal.

In both 'King Pest' and 'Mask of the Red Death', Poe directs his social criticism at both an American aristocracy that was founded on money and the relationship of the aristocracy to the peasantry. Scott addresses these issues from a different perspective,

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<sup>88</sup> Harrison, III, pp. 1256–1263.

<sup>89</sup> Elena V. Baraban, 'The Motive for Murder in "The Cask of Amontillado" by Edgar Allan Poe', *Rocky Mountain Review*, 58.2 (2004), 47–62 (p. 51).

questioning the familiar relationships and traditional Scottish class structures that were under strain in an industrialized world. Indeed, these shifting class structures can be closely allied with concerns associated with a move from the old to the new, a modernization of old-world values and structures. In 'Wandering Willie's Tale' from *Redgauntlet*, for example, Scott employs the grotesque to contrast traditional lord and vassal relationships to post-industrialized social hierarchies. Willie Steenson, the blind fiddler, tells the tale of his grandfather, Steenie, who had lived on the lands of the Redgauntlet's 'since the riding days, and lang before'. Willie is telling this story as a warning to Darcie about the dangers associated with trusting strangers. Steenie's relationship to the family of the Redgauntlet's was both as a tenant and as a favored family piper. As Willie begins to convey his tale, Darsie finds the speech and tone of the fiddler 'odd' and recognizes that Willie is trying to 'frighten' him, but Darsie 'Laughed at the extravagance of his language'.<sup>90</sup> This prelude to the tale sets the tone for a grotesque narrative.

According to Willie's tale, his grandfather had visited the castle of Redgauntlet to pay Sir Robert rents that were one year in arrears. Just as Steenie was paying his rent, Sir Robert died violently, and Steenie ran from the castle without the money or a receipt proving that he had paid. When Robert's son John summoned Steenie to Redgauntlet Castle to provide proof that he had paid the rent, Steenie was unable to do so. Frustrated and upset, Steenie once again ran from the castle into the woods, where he found an inn and got drunk. While wandering through the woods, drunk and alone, a stranger approached him and offered to help get the receipt from Sir Robert. Before Steenie fully comprehended his unusual circumstances, he realized the stranger had led him to hell where he came face to face with the spirit or the evil manifestation of Sir Robert. Steenie managed to resist all evil temptations presented to him, secured the receipt from Robert, and by speaking God's name, was mysteriously returned to the kirk at Redgauntlet. Steenie gave the receipt to John, and they discovered that Sir Robert's pet monkey had hidden the money in the castle. To avoid spreading the news that his father's soul had been relegated to the depths of hell, John bribed Steenie into silence by reducing his rent.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> *EEWN*, xvii, p. 86.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 101–118.



Steenie's relationship as the retainer of the violent feudal lord Sir Robert Redgauntlet is the issue. Scott's response initially seems less of a condemnation of this relationship than a sympathetic view towards the past. David Daiches perceptively notes, 'The relation between Wandering Willie and his master in the old days, however emotionally satisfying to contemplate, also represented a "feudal yoke"'.<sup>92</sup> This feudal yoke and the tyrannical Sir Robert are presented to the reader in a grotesque form, perhaps most notably in the humorous depiction of Sir Robert's agonizing death as described by his vassal Steenie:

But they werena weel out of the room, when Sir Robert gied a yelloch that garr'd the castle rock. Back ran Dougal—in flew the livery-men—yell on yell gied the laird, ilk ane mair awfu' than the ither. My gudesire knew not whether to stand or flee, but he ventured back into the parlour, where a' was gaun hirdy-girdie—naebody to say "come in", or "gae out". Terribly the laird roared for cauld water to his feet, and wine to cool his throat; and Hell, hell, hell, and its flames, was ay the word in his mouth. They brought him water, and when they plunged his swollen feet into the tub, he cried out it was burning; and folk say that it DID bubble and sparkle like a seething cauldron. He flung the cup at Dougal's head, and said he had given him blood instead of burgundy; and, sure aneugh, the lass washed clotted blood aff the carpet; the neist day. The jackanape they caa'd Major Weir, it jibbered and cried as if it was mocking its master; my gudesire's head was like to turn—he forgot baith siller and receipt, and downstairs he banged; but as he ran, the shrieks came faint and fainter; there was a deep-drawn shivering groan, and word gaed through the castle that the laird was dead.<sup>93</sup>

The story mocks and ridicules Sir Robert, both in his humorously horrible death and his subsequent imprisonment in the underworld. Even Sir Robert's pet monkey mocks him. Steenie assumes that Robert has a pact with the devil, which forces Steenie to track him into Hell to clear his own reputation. It is in Hell, however, where Steenie finds the courage to defy the caricatured version of his lord. Willie's tale, in this respect, is a reduced version of the novel that surrounds it:

Scott's rhetoric is one of mourning. [...] Redgauntlet narrates a loss, the fulfillment of one set of historical possibilities at the expense of the others [...]. The possibilities that die with Redgauntlet's rebellion are those that, like Wandering Willie, speak of and from traditions

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<sup>92</sup> David Daiches, *A Critical History of English Literature: The Restoration to 1800*, 4 vols (London: Secker & Warburg, 1969), III, p. 851.

<sup>93</sup> *EEWN*, XVII, P. 90.

that are passing away, and the replacement of old with new is not less painful for being inevitable.<sup>94</sup>

Maitzen's view suggests that the forfeiture of the lord/vassal relationship in a romanticized version of a tyrannical feudal system may be seen as a cause for mourning, a dying of tradition. Yet once we discover later in the novel that Darcie is actually the heir to Redgauntlet, Scott replaces the old tyrannical relationship with one of much more mutual respect as exemplified in the connection between the blind fiddler and the Redgauntlet heir. Letting go of the old ways may be painful, but Scott employs the grotesque here to make it less so, while the new is to be less feared.

In yet another example of criticism of early nineteenth-century social constructs, Scott's grotesque vision of the Black Dwarf provides commentary on a society willing to judge without fair trial. Although initially the physical deformities and exaggerations of the eponymous Elshender lead to a sense of disgust and distrust from others, his own misanthropy furthers a sense of fear and revulsion from the community. Scott makes it clear, however, that cynicism and distrust were not intrinsic characteristics of the dwarf, but the results of the ways in which society had mistreated him. The reader is first fully introduced to the grotesque dwarf in Chapter IV:

The being whom he addressed raised his eyes with a ghastly stare, and, [...] stood before them in all his native and hideous deformity. His head was of uncommon size, covered with a fell of shaggy hair, partly grizzled with age; his eyebrows, shaggy and prominent, overhung a pair of small dark, piercing eyes, set far back in their sockets, that rolled with a portentous wildness, indicative of a partial insanity. His body, thick and square, like that of a man of middle size, was mounted upon two large feet; but nature seemed to have forgotten the legs and the thighs, or they were so very short as to be hidden by the dress which he wore. His arms were long and brawny, furnished with two muscular hands, and, [...] were shagged with coarse black hair. It seemed as if nature had originally intended the separate parts of his body to be the members of a giant, but had afterwards capriciously assigned them to the person of a dwarf. [...] his whole appearance [...] seemed that of sullen malignant misanthropy.<sup>95</sup>

Scott gives a humorous description of a 'hideous deformity', detecting misanthropy even in the appearance of the dwarf. Of course, the reader soon learns that the dwarf is indeed misanthropic. Everyone he had ever cared about had betrayed him, and all he wanted

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<sup>94</sup> Rohan Maitzen, "'By No Means an Improbable Fiction': Redgauntlet's Novel Historicism', *Studies in the Novel*, 25.2 (1993), 170–83 (p. 178).

<sup>95</sup> *EEWN*, IVa, p. 29.

was to be left alone in his own self-loathing. Scott's certainly intends for his dwarf to be feared, with his ghastly stare, his small, dark piercing eyes, and his only partial sanity. This fear clashes with the humorous description of his body. Again, the story of Elshender mirrors the tensions created by the grotesque clashing of horror and humor. The horror in Scott's novel stems from the ways in which society has and continues to respond to the dwarf. Most of the other characters treat him horribly for no reason other than his grotesque size and appearance. The dwarf, as it turns out, is much more compassionate and caring than are most of the villagers. Scott's inside joke, however, is that the average Scottish citizen is so absorbed with superstition and tales of the supernatural that they are unable to make rational decisions. Scott claims to have based the character of the dwarf on an actual person named David Ritchie: 'The ideal being who is here presented as residing in solitude, and haunted by a consciousness of his own deformity and a suspicion of his being generally subjected to the scorn of his fellow men'.<sup>96</sup> The grotesque figure is both haunting and haunted, lurking through the moorland unwilling to deny satanic influences all the while being haunted by his physical deformities. Scott's target here is again voter reformation and the inability of the lower classes of society to make good decisions because they are prone to superstitions. They judge too easily.

In *The Black Dwarf*, Scott's misunderstood grotesque recluse compels the readers to reassess what they think they know, to question hasty and uninformed judgments. Scott criticizes society's willingness to condemn, or accept, based on face value alone. Despite the villagers not knowing anything about Elshender, they quickly conclude that he is a supernatural being in a pact with Satan. Poe similarly criticizes Americans who ignorantly believe without question whatever is told to them:

The world is infested, just now, by a new sect of philosophers, who have not yet suspected themselves of forming a sect, and who, consequently, have adopted no name. They are the *Believers in every thing Odd*. The only common bond among the sect, is Credulity: — let us call it Insanity at once, and be done with it. Ask any one of them *why* he believes this or that, and, if he be conscientious, (ignorant people usually are,) he will make you very much such a reply as Talleyrand made when asked why he believed in the Bible. "I believe in it first," said he, "because I am Bishop of Autun; and,

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<sup>96</sup> *EEWN*, xxva, p.158.

secondly, *because I know nothing about it at all.*" What these philosophers call "argument," is a way they have "*de nier ce qui est et d'expliquer ce qui n'est pas* [*To deny what is and explain what is not*]." <sup>97</sup>

In the short story 'The System of Doctor Tarr and Professor Fether', Poe explores both credulity and sanity, and 'believers in everything odd,' more fully.

This humorous tale centers on a group of patients in a mental health asylum who usurp the doctors and take over the facility. The institution had become somewhat famous for revolutionizing a new treatment for the mentally ill known as the 'system of soothing'. <sup>98</sup> The treatment involves allowing the patients much more freedom than had previously been available to patients with mental health problems, including allowing them to wear normal clothes and indulging in their fantasies. If a patient thought he or she was a chicken, for example, the treatment would involve regarding them as if they actually were a chicken, even going as far as to feed them chicken food. Poe's comical treatment of the mentally impaired is unquestionably grotesque. In one particular scene, the imprisoned doctors and nurses scream from the cells of the asylum while the narrator unwittingly dines with the patients:

My nerves were very much affected, indeed, by these yells; but the rest of the company I really pitied. I never saw any set of reasonable people so thoroughly frightened in my life. They all grew as pale as so many corpses, and, shrinking within their seats, sat quivering and gibbering with terror, and listening for a repetition of the sound. <sup>99</sup>

Of course, the humor here comes from the fact that the diners, as the reader soon discovers, are not entirely reasonable people- they are patients of a mental asylum. A number of clues should have alerted the narrator that he was being duped, yet he continues to believe that the patients are the staff. Poe's narrator is perhaps closer to insanity than the patients who have taken over the hospital. Neither the narrator nor his friend, who had visited the hospital earlier and had presumably been subjected to the same bizarre behavior, were able to see the obvious signs that would indicate that the patients had taken over the hospital. The patients, under the guise of hospital staff, are both physically and mentally grotesque, yet they were harmless and even humorous folk. The people that the narrator feared as 'horrors' were not the actual patients, but the asylum staff, the sane people. It may be said that the lunatics possibly outsmarted their

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<sup>97</sup> Harrison, XIV, p. 179.

<sup>98</sup> Harrison, III, p. 1004.

<sup>99</sup> Mabbott, II, pp. 997-1024.

doctors and care providers, but there can be no doubt that they outsmarted the narrator and his learned friend.

The treatment of the mentally ill was a volatile political issue during the time Poe wrote this short story. Patients were often treated as prisoners, frequently chained, locked up, and abused. In the early 1840s, Dorothea Dix made news when she lobbied for better treatment of people with a mental health condition. Both N. P. Willis and Charles Dickens became interested in and wrote about the treatment of the mentally ill.<sup>100</sup> Poe may have seen mental health reform as yet another unnecessary change, much like the movement to expand electorates discussed in the previous chapter. Indeed, one of Poe's aims in this 'absurd mad house grotesque'<sup>101</sup> is to criticize society's propensity to accept without understanding, to establish and support institutions blindly. The false doctor tells the narrator:

“You are young yet, my friend,” replied my host, “but the time will arrive when you will learn to judge for yourself of what is going on in the world, without trusting to the gossip of others. Believe nothing you hear, and only one half that you see. Now, about our *Maisons de Santé*, it is clear that some ignoramus has misled you.”<sup>102</sup>

People are too gullible and are incapable of making informed decisions regarding the government.

Another obvious motive for 'Tarr and Fether' is to underscore the thin line that separates madness and genius, an objective for Poe that could largely have been motivated by concerns over his own sanity, an issue that is revisited in a number of his other writings. The narrator in 'Eleonora', for example, decries, 'Men have called me mad; but the question is not yet settled, whether madness is or is not the loftiest intelligence'.<sup>103</sup> Poe writes in 'Fifty Suggestions':

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<sup>100</sup> Mabbott has traced the writings of Willis concerning the treatment of mental patients to a letter first printed in the *New-York Mirror*, November 23, 1833. He has also proven that Poe was familiar with the work, 'The story [...] was published in *Inklings of Adventure* (1836), a book Poe reviewed in the *Southern Literary Messenger* of August 1836, naming the story. The texts of the letter and story are available in Willis's *Prose Works* (1845), pp. 103 and 457'. See Mabbott, III, p. 998. Dickens recounts his visit to several asylums in Charles Dickens, *American Notes for General Circulation* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1842).

<sup>101</sup> George E. Woodberry, *American Men of Letters: Edgar Allan Poe* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1885), p. 233.

<sup>102</sup> Mabbott, II, p. 1007.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 638.

What the world calls “genius” is the state of mental disease arising from the undue predominance of some one of the faculties. The works of such genius are never sound in themselves and, in especial, always betray the general mental insanity.<sup>104</sup>

In ‘Marginalia’, number 247, he suggests, ‘any individual gifted, or rather accursed, with an intellect *very* far superior to that of his race [...] would be considered a madman’.<sup>105</sup>

Poe blurs this line separating our concepts of insanity even more personally in a letter to George Eveleth, stating, ‘I became insane, with long intervals of horrible sanity’.<sup>106</sup> The grotesque in ‘Tarr and Fether’ provides Poe another way in which to comment on the ideas of sanity and insanity, a way to force the reader to reassess his or her own beliefs.

As I have shown, both Scott and Poe employ the grotesque aesthetic to criticize or question political and social ideologies and the accompanying anxieties and concerns. Of course, another major source of concern for both Scott and Poe was the mass urbanization that was sweeping the industrialized world. One can read short stories such as ‘The Man of the Crowd’, ‘The Business Man’, and ‘A Predicament’, for example, all within a framework that serves to underscore the anxieties associated with living in a new urbanized society. Poe’s short story ‘The Man of the Crowd’ is from the outset a commentary on the rapid urbanization that Poe and his contemporaries were facing. Prefaced with the epigraph ‘*Ce grand malheur, de ne pouvoir être seul* (That great evil, to be unable to be alone)’, an ominous declaration of the evil inherent in the hearts of men begins the opening paragraph:

It was well said of a certain German book that ‘*er lasst sick nicht lesen*’ — it does not permit itself to be read. There are some secrets which do not permit themselves to be told. Men die nightly in their beds, wringing the hands of ghostly confessors, and looking them piteously in the eyes — die with despair of heart and convulsion of throat, on account of the hideousness of mysteries which will not *suffer themselves* to be revealed. Now and then, alas, the conscience of man takes up a burthen so heavy in horror that it can be thrown down only into the grave. And thus the essence of all crime is undivulged.<sup>107</sup>

For Poe, every human soul holds mysteries that will never be fully divulged, never be told. The characteristically unreliable nature of Poe’s narrator at once leads us to question the source of the impending evil in the story, but we certainly assume, given the

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<sup>104</sup> Harrison, XIV, p. 178.

<sup>105</sup> Edgar Allan Poe, ‘Marginalia’ [Part XV], *Southern Literary Messenger*, 15.6 (June 1849), 336–38, (p. 337).

<sup>106</sup> *LEAP*, II, p. 641.

<sup>107</sup> Mabbott, II, p. 505.

title of the story and the epigraph, that we are approaching a terror fashioned from a society where we are unable to escape the madness of a crowd. However, as we shall soon discover, the grotesque works in this tale to suggest that it is not the crowd or the urbanization that should excite fear, but it is the unknown in ourselves, the mysteries of our own souls.

The story begins with an unnamed narrator systematically categorizing the passing pedestrians from the comfort of a coffee shop on one of the main thoroughfares in London. As he is sorting through the 'tumultuous sea of human heads', he begins to make general comments on the masses, on the crowd as a whole, before narrowing his focus to specific groups and individuals. He describes the groups in the crowd that many would typically associate with crime and danger, individuals one would expect to be feared in an urban environment. The grotesque here stems from the juxtaposition of what one might consider to be the dangerous elements of society presented in such a humorous light that they no longer pose a threat; the fear of urbanization and crowding is lessened by the way in which the threats are presented. The pickpockets had 'voluminousness of wristband, with an air of excessive frankness'. The gamblers 'wore every variety of dress', but were recognizable from their 'sodden swarthinness of complexion, a filmy dimness of eye, and pallor and compression of lip', but even more so from 'a guarded lowness of tone in conversation, and a more than ordinary extension of the thumb in a direction at right angles with the fingers' (despite the fact that the narrator observes this lowness of tone while perched behind the smoky glass in the window of a coffee shop). The narrator also notices the men 'who live by their wits', 'the dandies and the military men', recognizable by their 'long locks and smiles' and 'frogged coats and frowns', respectively. 'Jew pedlars [sic]', beggars, invalids, prostitutes, drunkards, all discernable by some trait caricatured by the narrator. Besides these ruffians, the narrator also notes there were 'pie-men, porters, coal-heavers, sweeps; organ-grinders, monkey-exhibitors and ballad mongers, those who vended with those who sang; ragged artisans and exhausted laborers of every description'. This collection of ruffians and unusual people are not threatening. They are not dangerous nor are they to be feared. True fear comes from the unknown, from the man in the crowd the narrator notices, a person who defies categorization. This character's countenance challenges the narrator's neat classification system. The narrator follows the man throughout the streets of London all night, unable to affix any label on him. Exhausted from the long and

fruitless pursuit, the narrator, at last, declares the man ‘the type and the genius of deep crime’.<sup>108</sup>

Poe’s narrative functions on a number of distinct levels. Some scholars have speculated that the man of the crowd is a double of the narrator himself, representing his own darker side. Others have suggested this story is one of Poe’s hoaxes, the narrator pointlessly following a drunkard through the streets of London, much like the reader follows Poe through the text.<sup>109</sup> Regardless, one level of this narrative certainly pertains to how we exist in an environment fraught with a decadent populace, a crowd littered with every imaginable danger. Yet the horror or the fear is diminished once we can laugh at it. What we should truly fear, one might glean from this story, is the unknown, or, if we accept that the man of the crowd is the narrator’s *doppelgänger*, we should fear our repressed selves, not our expressed society. Our anxieties concerning mass urbanization are actually our enemy. Poe here addresses the issues of a modern society facing the dangers and uncertainties of mass urbanization. Renza notes a similar function in Poe’s detective stories, where the stories themselves ‘advertise methods to ferret out secrets dangerous to mid nineteenth-century order’, with Dupin solving crimes of murder through ‘ratiocination’.<sup>110</sup>

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, few critics have agreed on exactly what the grotesque is. Wolfgang Kayser’s seminal study on the subject ushered in an abundance of criticisms pertaining to the aesthetic form and its usage. While Kayser’s interpretation focused primarily on the horrible or terrible aspects, Bakhtin took an exact opposite approach by concentrating mainly on the comedic features of the grotesque. It seems as if both Kayser and Bakhtin are unwilling to accept the ambiguity of an aesthetic with incongruous attributes such as fear and laughter, the terrible and the humorous, the comic and the demonic. Since the publishing of the works from Kayser and Bakhtin, a number of critics have put forward a wide variety of theories attempting to explain what the grotesque means. Given the variations of the descriptions of the grotesque, Harpham’s warning that the term may come to mean nothing at all if we are unable to define it more precisely takes on a much more serious tone. Despite this warning, or perhaps because of it, I began this chapter with the promise of working towards a

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., pp. 505–18.

<sup>109</sup> For various interpretations of this story, see Mabbott, II, p. 105.

<sup>110</sup> Louis A. Renza, *Edgar Allan Poe, Wallace Stevens, and the Poetics of American Privacy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2002), p. 62.



definition of the grotesque through an examination of the works of Scott and Poe. However, before offering my own definition of the grotesque, I want to return briefly to Geoffrey Harpham's comments discussed earlier concerning the key characteristics of the aesthetic.

According to Harpham, what signifies an object as grotesque is its ability to arouse three responses: laughter, astonishment, and either horror or disgust. Scott would certainly agree. In his Hoffman review, for instance, Scott discusses the artistic works of seventeenth-century French printmaker and artist Jacques Callot, who was known for his grotesque prints, perhaps most notably in the series 'Grotesque Dwarfs'. Scott writes:

The works of Callot, though evincing a wonderful fertility of mind, are in like manner regarded with surprise rather than pleasure. In examining microscopically the diablerie of Callot's pieces, we only discover fresh instances of ingenuity thrown away, and of fancy pushed into the regions of absurdity.

Yet again, Scott criticizes a fertile imagination. However, he still created his own grotesque dwarf in the character Elshender the Recluse, the Black Dwarf. Scott continues in his essay to review Hoffman's 'Night Pieces in the Manner of Callot':

In order to write such a tale, for example, as that called "the Sandman," he [Hoffman] must have been deep in the mysteries of that fanciful artist [Callot], with whom he might certainly boast a kindred spirit.

Scott finds Hoffman and Callot to share a fantastically absurd imagination. To describe Hoffman's 'The Sandman', Scott turns to lines from Pope's 'The Dunciad': 'Half horror and half whim/ Like fiends in glee, ridiculously grim'.<sup>111</sup>

What stands out most in the above passages is that Scott seems to be attempting to define the grotesque, and in many ways, he comes to the same conclusions as Harpham. The grotesque is closely tied to the horrible, it surprises rather than pleases, and it is absurd. This sense is what the reader experiences when confronted with Scott's reclusive grotesque dwarf. Scott's description of such a 'hideous deformity' with a 'portentous wildness indicative of partial insanity' is certainly not without a humorous side. 'Nature seemed to have forgotten his legs and thighs', yet the dwarf's arms and hands were so ridiculously large that 'nature had originally intended the separate parts of his body to be the members of a giant' before 'capriciously' putting them on a dwarf. Shock or surprise

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<sup>111</sup> *The Miscellaneous Prose Works of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.*, XVIII, pp. 325-26. Scott quotes from Book III of Pope's *The Dunciad*. Alexander Pope, *The Complete Poetical Works of Alexander Pope*, ed. by Henry Walcott Boynton (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1903).

at the horrible and humorous also greets the reader of Scott's other grotesques, as we have seen in the outlandish death of Sir Robert Redgauntlet and in the simpleton Davie do little.

Poe too would agree with Harpham. In what Kayser describes as 'Perhaps the most complete and authoritative definition any author has given of the grotesque',<sup>112</sup> Poe writes of the revelers in 'The Mask of the Red Death':

Be sure they were grotesque. There were much glare and glitter and piquancy and phantasm --much of what has been since seen in 'Hernani'. There were arabesque figures with unsuited limbs and appointments. There were delirious fancies such as the madman fashions. There was much of the beautiful, much of the wanton, much of the bizarre, something of the terrible, and not a little of that which might have excited disgust.<sup>113</sup>

Poe, too, finds the grotesque surprising, horrifying, and amusing, and it is these three characteristics that we also find in Poe's grotesques. The shock, for example, of finding a humorous description of a paralyzed man becomes even more shocking after Poe tells the reader to take what follows seriously.

One can define the grotesque, then, as the shock of encountering the horrible uncomfortably colliding with the humorous, a clashing of heterogeneous passions. It is a literary aesthetic that can in some ways absorb the cultural, political, and social tensions of the early nineteenth century. In this sense, the grotesque is versatile in that it can act as either affirmative or subversive. Anxieties and ambiguity are tempered through the shade of the grotesque, through characters such as Davie Gellatley, whose middle ground represents keeping traditions while embracing modernity. Similarly, works can lessen certain social fears, as I demonstrated in 'Man of the Crowd', which exemplifies how Americans facing emerging mass urbanization can face the anxieties associated with this new way of life that seems to threaten traditional American values. For Poe's narrator, the feared dregs of society that lurk throughout our cities are grotesquely caricatured to present a much less fearful representation of a modern urbanized America. Likewise, Wandering Willie eases the pains of letting go of old values and traditional social relationships and favors post-industrialized social ties. The grotesqueries in this story provide Scott with a tool to suggest that feudal relationships of the past are no more, yet we can now enjoy a different type of relationship between different classes, a new

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<sup>112</sup> Kayser, p. 78.

<sup>113</sup> Mabbott, II, p. 673.

connection exemplified by the bond enjoyed by the heir to Sir Robert's Redgauntlet and the grandson of Robert's vassal. This new relationship is different, it represents both change and progress, but we are certainly not to fear this change. 'Wandering Willie's Tale' works towards uniting the extremes, equalizing the classes, by grotesquely caricaturing Sir Robert and his violent feudal yoke while easing tensions one may feel about how classes in a new modern world relate to one another.

The above examples show how the grotesque can ease tensions by promoting certain ideas, but the grotesque can also be employed to criticize. Poe, for instance, criticizes American aristocracy and class differences in 'Mask of the Red Death'. Even though Poe's criticism of class struggles may largely be the result of his own financial and emotional struggles and his bitterness towards aristocratic and upper-class arrogance, he was also witnessing a rapid expansion of a middle class fueled largely by the Industrial Revolution. In the end, Prince Prospero and his band of merry nobles fare no better than any of the lower-class subjects in the kingdom. Well before the horrors of the Red Death equalize the nobility and their subjects, Poe has already made them less powerful and less feared by presenting the revelers in their grotesque costumes and the grotesque ball they are attending.

Despite critical debates concerned with defining the grotesque, as I have demonstrated, one thing that most scholars do agree on is that the grotesque is a permeable and constantly shifting aesthetic category. Although I would certainly agree that many modern conceptions of the grotesque view it as an evolving and ever-changing aesthetic, I find this line of thought exceptionally curious when compared to other early nineteenth-century aesthetics. What I mean is that typically, when scholars discuss the beautiful, the picturesque, or the sublime as aesthetic categories, they often discuss them in the context of eighteenth and nineteenth-century aesthetic ideologies. On the occasions in which modern scholars attempt to give these aesthetics contemporary values, they often define them sub categorically, such as 'techno-sublime', 'eco-sublime', or 'suburban sublime'. The common thread to all of these subcategories is that they take as their starting point the sublime as it came to be defined in the culture of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. They all have a point of reference. The grotesque, however, is seldom referred to in early nineteenth-century terms. Why, it certainly seems reasonable to ask, are we constantly trying to reimagine the grotesque in terms of twenty-first-century literary aesthetics with no point of reference? This, I

believe, is the problem modern scholars have failed to acknowledge when attempting to define the grotesque.

My study positions the grotesque squarely in the lap of eighteenth and nineteenth-century literary aesthetic categories and in many ways bridges previous approaches that attempt to define the grotesque. I have created a point of reference by underscoring the grotesque as an operative aesthetic category through an examination of its transatlantic nature as explored in the works of Scott and Poe. As I have shown, these two authors were among the first to conceptualize the grotesque as a literary aesthetic. As they gained more confidence that their literary creations were becoming more accepted by both critics and readers as a serious form of art, they came to refine and define their own aesthetics, perhaps most notably the grotesque. The transatlantic approach I have taken in this chapter reveals that writers on both sides of the Atlantic imagined the grotesque in the same ways. Both Scott and Poe came to view the grotesque as an aesthetic which, with the striking juxtaposition of shock and humor, could effectively polarize, criticize, or occasionally, ease tensions.

As I have demonstrated in this chapter, both Scott and Poe use the grotesque to comment on a variety of political issues. Likewise, politics have also been one of the themes touched on in both Chapters One and Two. Without question, the Gothic genre is one in which politics often takes a central role. Because of the importance of politics not only in Gothic fiction generally but also in my exploration of the transatlantic nature of the genre as seen through Scott and Poe up to this point, in the following chapter I will provide a very brief overview of the politics of both Scott and Poe, focusing mostly on the political ideologies that are most relevant to the comments previously touched on in my discussions of publication histories, footnotes, epigraphs, and the grotesque.

## Chapter Four

### ‘Unwashed Artificers’, ‘Democratic Rabble’, and the Gothic Horrors of Early Nineteenth-Century Political Economy

Mr. Gliddon [...] could not make the Egyptian comprehend the term “politics”, until he sketched upon the wall, with a bit of charcoal, a little carbuncle-nosed gentleman, out at elbows, standing upon a stump, with his left leg drawn back, his right arm thrown forward, with the fist shut, the eyes rolled up toward Heaven, and the mouth open at an angle of ninety degrees.<sup>1</sup>

In October 2018, award-winning British writer Sarah Perry published her third novel, a Gothic tale entitled *Melmoth*. The novel shares both theme and general structure with Maturin’s novel *Melmoth the Wanderer*. Maturin’s story tells of a man who sells his soul to the devil so that he may live another 150 years and, in the manner of the Wandering Jew, roams the earth for the next 150 years searching for a soul to take his place. Perry’s protagonist, however, is a woman who travels the world observing atrocities. To be certain, Perry’s *Melmoth* is a political novel, one which forces us to confront our complicity in historical atrocities while retaining the fortitude to forge a better future. In an interview with Lily Meyer from *Crimereads*, Perry insists, ‘Gothic fiction combines huge fun, mystery, chills, and atmosphere with a deeply serious, and often deeply political, look at the world’. ‘Gothic’, she continues, ‘can be political, and always has been’.<sup>2</sup> As we have seen through the first three chapters of this research, both Scott and Poe frequently use their fictions to comment on a variety of political issues. In Chapter Two, for example, Scott’s peritext in *The Black Dwarf* portrays a Scottish population that is socially irresponsible largely because of their gullibility and longstanding belief in superstition, while his grotesque account of Sir Robert discussed in Chapter 3 questions familiar relationships and traditional Scottish class structures. Likewise, the second chapter of this research underscores Poe’s critical response to transcendental thought, while the next chapter highlights his criticism of American aristocracy through his grotesque characters in ‘King Pest’.

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<sup>1</sup> Mabbott, III, pp. 1184-85.

<sup>2</sup> Sarah Perry. ‘Gothic Fiction has Always Been Political: Monsters, Mystery, and Bearing Witness’, interview by Lily Meyer. *Crimereads*, 19 October 2018. <<https://crimereads.com/sarah-perry-gothic-fiction-has-always-been-political/>> [Accessed 11 December 2018].

That the fictions of both Scott and Poe can be read through a political lens is a point that other scholars have certainly made.<sup>3</sup> However, reading political ideologies through fictions can be misleading because it is easy to misinterpret what those positions are. It becomes necessary, therefore, to explore more thoroughly the political positions that Scott and Poe take, particularly in relation to the political ideologies suggested in the previous chapters of this research. In this chapter, I will provide a brief overview of the expressed political principles of both Scott and Poe, exploring not only their works of fiction but also their other non-fiction writings as well as their actions. Such an exploration also invites the argument that the tendency of scholars to separate British and American Gothic modes has generally been overstated, further justifying a transatlantic approach to these two prolific writers.

Leslie Fiedler's *Love and Death in the American Novel* (1960) marks a significant turning point in the study of Gothic fiction by distinguishing separate American and British models of the genre. Fiedler argues that the American Gothic form diverged from its British predecessor at the point of the uniquely American experience. American Gothic, Fiedler claims, codified 'certain special guilts' exceptional to American culture, such as slavery, frontier expansion, and the politics of a young democracy. For Fiedler, Charles Brockden Brown and American writers who followed him reinvented the Gothic form through a 'complex metamorphosis' more fit for America.<sup>4</sup> Fiedler's predominately psychoanalytical survey is a pivotal work on which practically any analysis of a uniquely 'American' Gothic tradition is founded. Eric Savoy, for example, draws on Fiedler's 'American context' of a Gothic tradition when he argues that American Gothic is 'distinctively *American*' not only in its adaptation to 'the democratic situation of the new world', but more importantly, 'the way it express[es] a profound anxiety about historical

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<sup>3</sup> There are certainly numerous examples of scholars reading the fictions of both Scott and Poe as political writings. Some prominent examples of books from studies of Scott include Ian Duncan's *Scott's Shadow*, (2007), Caroline McCracken-Flesher's *Possible Scotlands: Walter Scott and the Story of Tomorrow* (Oxford: OUP, 2005), and Susan Oliver's *Scott, Byron and the Poetics of Cultural Encounter* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), just to name a few. Likewise, Poe scholars have also read his fictions as political in nature. Important examples include J. Gerald Kennedy's *Strange Nation: Cultural Conflict and Literary Nationalism in the Age of Poe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016) and Terence Whalen's *Edgar Allan Poe and the Masses: The Political Economy of Literature in Antebellum America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

<sup>4</sup> Leslie A. Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel* (New York: Criterion Books, 1960), pp. 127, 145.

crimes and perverse human desires that cast their shadow over what many would like to be the sunny American republic'.<sup>5</sup> Teresa Goddu also draws on Fiedler when she situates American Gothic within a framework of nation-building and national identity, insisting that Gothic fiction 'helps to run the machine of national identity' in America.<sup>6</sup> In his study of *American Gothic Fiction*, Allen Lloyd-Smith, also informed by Fiedler's survey, argues that 'certain unique cultural pressures' led early American Gothic writers to diverge from their British counterparts to create 'an expression of their very different conditions'. Among these cultural pressures were 'anxieties about popular democracy'.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the inclination of scholars of American Gothic to turn to Fiedler's work as a starting point, not all critics agree that unique American experiences or democracy are at the heart of American Gothic fiction, or even that Americans reinvented the Gothic form at all. Leonard Tennenhouse, for example, finds that delineating British and American Gothic literature separately is much more complicated than many critics are willing to admit. Tennenhouse argues that while early American writers adapted existing British models to their own circumstances, what marks American Gothic as distinct is not the cultural conditions that were unique to the country, but is instead the ways in which American authors sought to reaffirm their British roots. 'American authors', he argues, 'reinvented the homeland by producing a generic notion of Englishness particularly adapted to the North American situation'.<sup>8</sup> Sian Silyn Roberts also agrees that critical approaches to Gothic fiction that draw firm boundaries between British and American traditions based on cultural histories are problematic. 'To draw a strict demarcation of European and American Gothics at the level of historical experience is to retell the story of one of the most powerful foundational myths of American self-fashioning', she writes.<sup>9</sup> Roberts recognizes that much of the current criticism on American Gothic still relies on Fiedler's critical study, arguing that 'American Gothic studies remains, in the face of disciplinary realignment, largely committed to exceptionalist national distinctions- "British" versus "American" Gothics- and the allegorical fallacies of

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<sup>5</sup> Eric Savoy, 'The Rise of American Gothic', in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. by Jerrold E. Hogle (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), pp. 167–88 (p. 168).

<sup>6</sup> Teresa A. Goddu, *Gothic America: Narrative, History, and Nation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 10.

<sup>7</sup> Allan Lloyd-Smith, *American Gothic Fiction: An Introduction*, Continuum Studies in Literary Genre (New York: Continuum, 2005) p. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Tennenhouse, *The Importance of Feeling English*, p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> Sian Silyn Roberts, 'A Transnational Perspective on American Gothic Criticism', in *Transnational Gothic: Literary and Social Exchanges in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Monika Elbert and Bridget M. Marshall (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 19–34 (p. 23).

psychoanalysis'. Specifically, Roberts questions critics such as Fiedler, Lloyd-Smith, and others who claim American Gothic is in any way shaped by what they consider uniquely American concerns. Issues taken up in American Gothic such as anxieties about popular democracy, she argues, do not make it 'uniquely American' in either 'experience' or 'expression', but only represent a British form appropriated for an American audience. Noting the 'manifest narrative elements' from British Gothic that continued to permeate the American tradition, she argues that it is 'more likely that the tradition of American Gothic letters developed not from an originary national culture but through ongoing negotiation with and appropriation of British forms'. As such, Roberts suggests that 'American Gothic is due for reappraisal' largely because of the ways in which its criticisms have generally focused on nationalism or nation building and have been oddly resistant to transatlantic approaches.<sup>10</sup>

I strongly agree with Roberts when she argues that criticism far too often overstates the separation of British and American Gothic fictions. The first chapter of this research has already demonstrated what Roberts briefly touches on, 'a mutually constitutive relationship between American literary production and the circulation of European categories of thought through an Atlantic world'.<sup>11</sup> The circulation of thoughts and ideas throughout the Atlantic world become obvious in Chapter One, where publishing histories and the business of print authorship demonstrates a shared network of readers, critics, publishers, editors, and even in many ways legal issues. Chapters Two and Three illustrate how these shared thoughts emerge in the shape of common aesthetics and stylistic tropes across the Gothic genre. Such thought already puts considerable strain on arguments that separate British and American Gothic traditions. To argue her point, Roberts looks to the manifest narrative elements that American writers of Gothic fiction retained from the British model, such as forms, motifs, conventions, settings, and tropes that include confinement, darkness, and persecution. I want to go even further and suggest that at least some of the tensions and anxieties critics claim to be uniquely American- the 'peculiar institution' of slavery in the American South, westward expansion and the 'frontier experience', revolution and the threat of civil war, the democratic 'experiment'- are in fact uniquely American only in name. Specifically, I will argue that the concerns that Poe expresses about the future of America and its

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 19, 22, 24, 21.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 24.



relationship to democracy echo Scott's anxieties concerning the future of Scotland and potential threats to the existing Scottish government. The focus here will be on exploring the complicated political positions of Scott and Poe through a close examination of their fiction, nonfiction, reviews, personal correspondences, and, for Scott, his journal. Through such an examination, it becomes clear that Scott and Poe articulate very similar political fears, anxieties, and, occasionally, possible solutions.

Scott is seemingly an obvious choice for an examination of the political position of a writer of fiction. In fact, Scott was very much a political writer, and he expressed his political views often, both in his fiction and his nonfiction. He was a vocal Tory conservative, a staunch supporter of both the Union and the House of Hanover. Paradoxically, he also sought to create a unique identity for Scotland that could still be separated from England. Poe, on the other hand, may seem like an unusual choice. His political position often appears vague and even self-contradictory. He seems to have seldom supported or believed in democracy, at least not in the same ways as most of his contemporaries. There are numerous examples of Poe's political views outside of his fictions, and in those, he is often critical of the American political system. It is, in fact, precisely the ways in which he criticized democracy and American politics more generally that mark him as a perfect example for this research. While many of his contemporaries were singing the praises of American Democracy, Poe was often critical of American politics and he offered a clear picture of some of the potential problems with such a form of government. Reading Poe beside Scott offers an intriguing view of how the 'unique pressures of democracy' in America only echo the fears and anxieties that Scott had already articulated.

This chapter begins by focusing on how Scott expressed some of his political ideologies in his writings. His fear of social disorder and the fall of the Scottish government led to a relentless effort to reconcile disparate groups of Scots. Additionally, his open resistance to voter reformation efforts designed to expand the electorate was a direct result of his fears that the lower classes of society would have a say in the future of Scotland. Following an examination of some of Scott's politics, the next section of this chapter moves into a discussion of Poe's complicated political position. Unlike Scott, Poe's stance towards politics is often not so well articulated and can be self-contradictory at times. It becomes clear, however, that Poe, like Scott, feared the potential for mobs and civil unrest, and that his fears of the American educated aristocracy losing political

power to the uneducated lower classes of American society also fueled his resistance to egalitarian democracy.

### **‘Desperate Rabble’, ‘Unwashed Artificers’, and Scott’s Political Toryism**

Walter Scott often expressed anxieties concerning mobs and the impact civil unrest may have on the future of Scotland. ‘I hate mobs of all kinds’, he wrote to Lady Abercorn in 1809, ‘but I fear disciplined mobs especially’.<sup>12</sup> It was not only the disorder and the violence that were inherent in the mob mentality that Scott feared but also the threat that civil unrest presented to the existing government. In *The Life of Napoleon*, for example, he writes:

The dark intrigues which had been long formed for accomplishing a general insurrection in Paris, were now ready to be brought into action. [...] The number of desperate characters who were to lead the van in these violences, was now greatly increased. Besides troops of galley-slaves and deserters, vagabonds of every order flocked to Paris, like ravens to the spoil. To these were joined the lowest inhabitants of a populous city, always ready for riot and rapine [...], and thought [they] could only be victorious by the destruction of the present government.<sup>13</sup>

Such violence from civil unrest appears often throughout the Waverley novels, such as the murderous mob who drowned Jean Gordon in the introduction to *Guy Mannering*,<sup>14</sup> the ‘whole mob of Perth’ and the attack on Smotherwell in *The Fair Maid of Perth*,<sup>15</sup> and the Edinburgh mob lynching Captain Porteous in *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*,<sup>16</sup> just to name a few violent instances. In the passage quoted above, Scott suggests that mob violence is a natural characteristic of the lower classes of society, a belief he echoes in *Guy Mannering*:

The fire began now to rise high, and thick clouds of smoke rolled past the window at which Bertram and Dinmont were stationed. Sometimes, as the wind pleased, the dim shroud of vapour hid everything from their sight; sometimes a red glare illuminated both land and sea, and shone full on the stern and fierce figures who, wild with ferocious activity, were engaged in loading the boats. The fire

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<sup>12</sup> LSWS, II, p. 275.

<sup>13</sup> Sir Walter Scott, *The Life of Napoleon Buonaparte, Emperor of the French*, 9 vols (Edinburgh: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, & Green, 1827), I, pp. 154–55.

<sup>14</sup> EEWN, xxva, pp. 111–12.

<sup>15</sup> EEWN, xxi, p. 235.

<sup>16</sup> EEWN, vi, 62–63.

was at length triumphant, and spouted in jets of flame out at each window of the burning building, while huge flakes of flaming materials came driving on the wind against the adjoining prison, and rolling a dark canopy of smoke over all the neighbourhood. The shouts of a furious mob resounded far and wide; for the smugglers in their triumph were joined by all the rabble of the little town and neighbourhood [...], some from interest in the free trade, and most from the general love of mischief and tumult natural to a vulgar populace.<sup>17</sup>

Here, Scott suggests that violence and mob mentality are inherent traits in the common citizen, but this short passage from *Guy Mannering* also shows how the Gothic presents Scott's political anxieties in a very specific way. In this instance, Scott stages the violence and destruction created by mobs in a way meant to excite fear and horror. Using words such as dim, shroud, and hid, the threat begins in obscurity; it comes in the wind, as a cloud, a vapor, in a canopy of smoke and in jets of flame.<sup>18</sup> However, the threat is real. It is mob, and it is stern, fierce, wild, ferocious, and vulgar, and the ramifications of its destructive force resound far and wide. This is Scott frightening his readers, warning them of the potential dangers of mobs, underscoring the violence and incivility of proletariat uprisings and civil unrest. The mobs in Scott's fictions often mirror the mob he writes of in *Napoleon*. Likewise, Poe also expresses concerns about violence and the destructive force of mobs in stories such as 'Mellonta Tauta' and 'Some Words with a Mummy', both of which I discuss in detail later in this chapter.

Scott's hatred for mobs and violence may stem from his familiarity with civil unrest. As the Laird of Abbotsford, he had faced an angry mob of 'reformers' during what would become known as the 'Radical War' of 1820. 'As to reformation', he would write in his journal, 'I have no great belief in it'. Scott, in his role as the Sheriff-Depute of Selkirkshire, also had first-hand experience with civil disorder. He writes of the mob 'who showed their sense of propriety by hissing, hooting, and making all sorts of noises'<sup>19</sup> during a meeting at Jedburgh concerning the Reform Bill in 1831. Scott the historian, the biographer of Napoleon Bonaparte, was all too familiar with the potential consequences of civil unrest. Besides, the events of the French Revolution had played out during Scott's lifetime. He was a young law student at Edinburgh University in 1789 when a mob of French citizens stormed the Bastille. He was an extremely popular poet

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<sup>17</sup> *EEWN*, II, p. 294.

<sup>18</sup> The obscure nature of the threat is yet another example of Scott employing Burke's theory that obscurity is necessary to make anything terrible.

<sup>19</sup> Scott, *Journal*, II, pp. 126, 387.

and had already published *Waverley* by the time Napoleon was ultimately defeated at Waterloo. He toured the battlefield within two months of the battle, and what he saw there horrified him. Scott was familiar with mob violence.

Violence, destruction, death, and usurped governments are all the result of mobs of lower-class citizens operating under the guise of ‘reformation’, at least in Scott’s view. Unchecked, this rabble would decide the future of Scotland:

The White Boys made a great noise when I was a boy. But Ireland (the more is the pity) has never been without White Boys, or Right Boys, or Defenders, or Peep-of-day Boys, or some wild association or another for disturbing the peace of the country. We shall not be many degrees better if the Radical Reformers be not checked.<sup>20</sup>

Reform, however, was to become a part of early nineteenth-century politics in Scotland, as the Reform Act of 1832 proves. Among other changes, the bill extended voting rights, increasing the number of voters in Scotland from 4,239 to a massive 65,000.<sup>21</sup> Scott was openly against these changes. In his reactionary political pamphlet *The Visionary*, he offers an unapologetic view of his thoughts on voter reformation:

An enlargement of the elective privilege, which should bring the fickle, unthinking, and brutal mob into the field, would be a measure which must speedily terminate in military despotism, to which men have fled, in all ages and countries, as an evil whose terrors were incalculably less than those of a factious and furious democracy.<sup>22</sup>

Of course, this is yet another example of Scott’s Gothic imagination as I defined it in my Introduction. This is the same imagination that staged riots throughout the *Waverley* novels, now presenting a political tract warning yet again of the dangers of the common citizen having a right to vote, the ‘brutal mob’ of the proletariat, this time from the mind of a dreamer, a visionary. When the voter reformation bill was being debated in 1831, Scott despondently wrote of the assembled mob, ‘these unwashed artificers are from henceforth to select our legislators’.<sup>23</sup> Well before 1831, however, it is clear that Scott had already expressed concerns about a proletariat uprising.

Scott’s concerns about the possibility of a Scottish uprising were certainly justified, as the ingredients for just such a revolution existed. In the early nineteenth century

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<sup>20</sup> Lockhart, IV, p. 301. The White Boys were a violent group of Irish tenant farmers who were fighting for their rights to subsistence farming in the late Eighteenth century.

<sup>21</sup> W. Ferguson, ‘The Reform Act (Scotland) of 1832: Intention and Effect’, *The Scottish Historical Review*, 45.139 (1966), 105–14 (p. 105).

<sup>22</sup> Sir Walter Scott, *The Visionary. Nos. I.ii.iii* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and T. Cadell, 1819), pp. 14–15.

<sup>23</sup> Scott, *Journal*, II, p. 387.

following the defeat of Napoleon, Scotland was experiencing a recession, an influx of soldiers to the workforce, more competitive trade markets, and mass urbanization, all of which were at least partially a result of industrialization. The massive increase in the urban population was also exacerbated by the fact that the Scottish elite were relocating Highlanders *en masse* to make room for sheep that created more revenue. Additionally, Scotland was largely suffering a geopolitical divide, with many Highlanders still sympathetic to the Jacobite cause. The Scottish Insurrection of 1820, which took the form of a series of often violent uprisings largely instigated by unemployed weavers, attests to the possibilities of a revolution in Scotland that in many ways would mirror the beginnings of the revolution in France.

Scott was unsympathetic towards the violence of the French Revolution, and, in fact, he was against violence and upheaval in general. He was a man of law and order, a man of the courts, and a baronet. He had the reputation of a gentleman who had a true love for his native land and his fellow citizens and he abhorred lawlessness and disorder. As much as Scott may have despised violence, however, his contempt did not extend to state-sanctioned capital punishment or violence meant to preserve the peace:

I think whoever pretends to reform a corrupted nation, or a disorderly regiment, or an ill-ordered ship of war, must begin by severity, and only resort to gentleness when he has acquired the complete mastery by terror--the terror being always attached to the law; and, the impression once made, he can afford to govern with mildness, and lay the iron rule aside. [...] when men are taught a crime of a certain character is connected inseparably with death, the moral habits of a population become altered.<sup>24</sup>

Law and order must be maintained, despite whatever violent measures are to be adopted to this end. Corruption, disorder, and chaos are to be met with violence, a violence that serves the greater good and the interest of the public.

Supporting capital punishment to keep order in a corrupted nation is a necessity for Scott, who sees corruption at the heart of civil unrest and mob rule. One of the many causes of corruption is mass urbanization.

The state of society now leads so much to great accumulations of humanity that we cannot wonder if it ferment and reek like a compost dunghill. Nature intended that population should be diffused over the

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 127.

soil in proportion to its extent. We have accumulated in huge cities and smothering manufacturies the numbers which should be spread over the face of a country and what wonder that they should be corrupted? We have turned healthful and pleasant brooks into morasses and pestiferous lakes.<sup>25</sup>

Crowding into cities epitomizes humanity's willful defiance of a natural order, a defiance that, for Scott, necessarily breeds corruption. It is not only unhealthy for people to be corralled into cities, he suggests, it is also unnatural. Scott's anxieties concerning crowded cities may well be a concern for contravening a natural order, but the corruption such overcrowding breeds carries deeper political implications. For example, in comparing the 'successful republic' of the newly formed United States to the First Republic created by the National Convention during France's Revolution, Scott suggests the French experiment failed largely because of one of the types of corruption that crowding into cities may incite:

But that great and flourishing empire [America] consists, it must be remembered, of a federative union of many states, which, though extensive in territory, are comparatively thin in occupants. There do not exist in America, in the same degree, those circumstances of a dense and degraded population. [...] The republic of America, moreover, did not consist of one huge and populous country, with an overgrown capital, where the legislative body, cooped up in its precincts like prisoners, were liable to be acted upon by the applauses or threats of a desperate rabble.<sup>26</sup>

Urbanization corrupted the French, both the population and the government. The citizens became no more than desperate rabble, unduly influencing a corrupt legislative body more concerned with the opinions of the mob than they were with the state of the nation. Scott's journal entry quoted above, then, seems more of a warning about corruption than an observation of society. It is also evident that Scott's Gothic imagination is at work even in his nonfiction, employing the common Gothic trope of confinement or isolation to describe the effects of French urbanization on the legislative body.

Scott had witnessed the possible ramifications of corruption in government, the powers of the 'desperate rabble', when he visited the battlefield at Waterloo following Napoleon's defeat. He understood the death and destruction to be the consequences of

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<sup>25</sup> Scott, *Journal*, II, pp. 126–27.

<sup>26</sup> Scott, *The Life of Napoleon Buonaparte, Emperor of the French*, II, pp. 91–94.

the masses that rise to become revolutionaries, ‘unwashed artificers’ that control the destiny of a nation. He had written of the fall of the Bastille, ‘the mob of Paris, or rather the suborned agitators by whom the actions of that blind multitude were dictated, became masters of the destiny of France’.<sup>27</sup> It was the masses, the ‘blind multitude’, the lemmings come ‘desperate rabble’ that caused such violence and destruction in France. The American republic avoided this same fate only because its population had not accumulated into cities; the young country did not have an overgrown capital. For Scott, the mass urbanization seen in Edinburgh and Glasgow modeled the very reason the French Republic failed, breeding a degraded population and a corrupt legislative body.

Of course, Scott had no control over the modernization of Scotland, nor could he prevent corruption. Yet in his fictions, we often find appeals to the masses aimed at preventing civil unrest and perhaps a tempering of his own anxieties of a failed government. For example, he employs pride as a weapon in *Paul’s Letters to his Kinsfolk*. In this series of fictional letters relating Scott’s travels to the battlefield at Waterloo, the eponymous Paul writes to his imaginary ‘Cousin the Major’:

The high and paramount part which Britain now holds in Europe, that pre-eminence, which, in so many instances, has made her and her delegates the chosen mediators when disputes occurred amongst the allied powers, depends entirely on our maintaining pure and sacred our national character for good faith and disinterested honour.<sup>28</sup>

Good faith and disinterested honor were exactly what Scott was hoping to inspire in the Scottish people by placing their national character on an international stage. All throughout Europe, he tells his fellow citizens, the British are known for and expected to have good character and should be proud. Civil unrest is a European disease that good faith and honor will keep from afflicting the British population as well.

Throughout his novels, Scott also works to avoid civil unrest by seeking a middle ground for disparate Scots, by attempting to ease tensions through reconciliations. The Jacobite and Hanoverian conflict, for example, has been one of the major themes or settings in many of his novels, including *Waverley*, *Redgauntlet*, *Rob Roy*, and *The Black Dwarf*. These texts largely work towards reconciling tensions between Jacobite supporters and pro-Hanoverian enthusiasts. In Scott’s first novel, Edward Waverley is an Englishman who had been raised by his uncle, a Jacobite sympathizer. Temporarily on

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<sup>27</sup> Scott, *The Life of Napoleon Buonaparte, Emperor of the French*, I, p. 166.

<sup>28</sup> Sir Walter Scott, *Paul’s Letters to His Kinsfolk*, 2nd edn (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Co., 1816), p. 373.

leave from the British Dragoons, passion and a search for adventure lead young Waverley to join the doomed Jacobite uprising of 1745. He survives a series of violent and bloody battles and even saves the life of an English colonel at the Battle of Prestonpans. Following the Jacobite defeat, Edward, facing execution for treason, discovers that this colonel had intervened in his trial and that the government had decided to stay his execution. Romantic sentiment had fueled Edward's support for the Jacobites, and Scott's romantic portrayal of the Highlanders who supported Charles Edward Stuart suggests sympathy for the Jacobites. However, it is a sympathy that belongs in the romantic past. Edward is spurned by the 'wildly enthusiastic' Flora MacIvor, the sister of a Highland chief and a staunch supporter of the House of Stuart. Instead, he weds the levelheaded, pro-Hanoverian Rose Bradwardine, elevating post-Union sensibilities over Jacobite romanticism, yet Scott neither criticizes nor condemns the Jacobites or their cause. In galvanizing post-Union sensibilities and support for the Hanoverian regime, after sparing Waverley's life, the English colonel tells him to '*remember what you owe to the lenity of government*'.<sup>29</sup>

Reconciliations such as those seen in *Waverley* become major themes throughout many of Scott's novels. Scott works towards easing tensions between Jacobite followers and Hanoverian supporters, such as we see in *Waverley*, but he also seeks a middle ground between Norman and Saxon, rich and poor, and noble and the proletariat. James Kerr asserts that what Scott attempts to create in *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*, for example, is 'a middle ground between the novel's political extremes, between the unruly tenants of Scotland and their harsh and oppressive landlord'.<sup>30</sup>

Religious tolerance is also frequently expressed in Scott's novels, perhaps most notably in *Ivanhoe*'s resentment towards anti-Semitism. In this novel, Scott paints a sympathetic picture of Jews in the twelfth century through the characters Rebecca and her father Isaac. *Ivanhoe* is not the only example of Scott's religious tolerance. In *The Talisman* and elsewhere, Scott also shows respect for Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists.

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<sup>29</sup> *EEWN*, I, p. 334.

<sup>30</sup> James Kerr, 'Scott's Fable of Regeneration: The Heart of Midlothian', *ELH*, 53.4 (1986), 801–20 (pp. 817–18) <<https://doi.org/10.2307/2873175>> [accessed 2 January 2019].



Stuart Kelly notes that Scott ‘creates some of the earliest sympathetic portraits of Jewish and Hindu characters’.<sup>31</sup>

Though Scott’s novels often work towards easing political or cultural tensions, he also took on a much more active role in reconciling groups with differing beliefs and ideologies. For example, in 1818 he recovered the Scottish Crown Jewels from a wooden crate in the castle at Edinburgh. Scott considered the Honours of Scotland ‘ancient symbols of national independence’,<sup>32</sup> but also used their discovery to strengthen support for the Union. In a letter to his friend John Croker, he writes:

The discovery of the Regalia has interested people's minds much more strongly than I expected, and is certainly calculated to make a pleasant and favourable impression upon them in respect to the kingly part of the constitution. It would be of the utmost consequence that they should be occasionally shown to them, under proper regulations, and for a small fee.<sup>33</sup>

As Evan Gottlieb points out, Scott is already attempting to employ the Crown Jewels as important symbols of both Scottish and British respect for monarchs. ‘Given the right institutional conditions’, Gottlieb writes, ‘the Regalia could be deployed as a signifier of a British, rather than merely Scottish, tradition of the veneration of royalty’.<sup>34</sup>

Scott also played an active role in the Scottish Insurrection of 1820 and the events leading up to it, both in understanding where the locals stood on the issues and in offering resources to help end any violent uprisings that did occur in Scotland. In his *Memoirs of Scott*, Lockhart notes:

Towards the winter of 1819 there prevailed a spirit of alarming insubordination among the mining population of Northumberland and the weavers of the west of Scotland; and Scott was particularly gratified with finding that his own neighbours at Galashiels had escaped the contagion.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Stuart Kelly, *Walter Scott*, speech given at the Edinburgh International Book Festival in August 2010, quoted in Charlotte Higgins, ‘Scotland’s Image-Maker Sir Walter Scott “Invented English Legends”’, *The Guardian*, 16 August 2010, section Books <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/aug/16/walter-scott-edinburgh-book-festival>> [accessed 1 September 2016].

<sup>32</sup> Lockhart, IV, p. 112.

<sup>33</sup> *LSWS*, v, p. 75.

<sup>34</sup> Evan Gottlieb, *Feeling British: Sympathy and National Identity in Scottish and English Writing, 1707-1832* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Press, 2007), p. 197.

<sup>35</sup> Lockhart, IV, p. 318.

The weavers of Galashiels had gathered across the Tweed from Abbotsford and held council with Scott, who ascertained that they had ‘escaped the contagion’. In a letter to Lord Montagu, Scott writes, ‘The Galashiels weavers, both men and masters, have made their political creed known to me, and have sworn themselves anti-radical’.<sup>36</sup>

Scott, along with friend and neighbor John Scott of Gala, also created their own militia, the ‘Loyal Foresters’, around 200 men that Scott had offered to send anywhere in Scotland to fight radicals or to quell any potential violent outbreaks. In a letter to his brother Thomas in late December, Scott writes, ‘Scott of Gala and I have offered 200 men, all fine strapping young fellows, and good marksmen, willing to go any where with us. We could easily double the number’. He later expresses his enthusiasm towards raising a private militia to his friend William Laidlaw:

Gala and I go hand in hand, and propose to raise at least a company each of men, to be drilled as sharpshooters or infantry, which will be a lively and interesting amusement for the young fellows. The dress we propose to be as simple, and at the same time as serviceable as possible; a jacket and trowsers of Galashiels grey cloth, and a smart bonnet with a small feather, or, to save even that expense, a sprig of holly. And we will have shooting at the mark, and prizes, and fun, and a little whisky, and daily pay when on duty or drill.<sup>37</sup>

This correspondence sounds more as if Scott were planning a party than raising a militia. He was, however, dedicated to preserving peace in Scotland, and probably only intended participation in the militia to be an enjoyable experience for the people who agreed to volunteer. Perhaps Scott’s disdain for violence also led him to plan a potential war as if it were a social gathering, but this is also another instance of Scott’s imagination influencing him. Regardless of how we interpret Scott’s party-planning approach to raising a militia, he emphasizes his commitment to maintaining law and order by intending to join the militia himself:

I do not wish to take any command farther than such as shall entitle me to go with the corps, for I wish it to be distinctly understood that, in whatever capacity, *I go with them*, and take a share in good or bad as it casts up.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> *LSWS*, vi, p. 15.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 76, 65-66.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

Scott did more than just offer a private militia to quell the potential violence. Following the insurrection, or the ‘Radical War’, Scott suggested employing the ‘radicals’ to build a road around Salisbury Crags in Edinburgh, a road that would become known as ‘Radical Road’.<sup>39</sup> Such a move is indicative of Scott’s relentless pursuit of reconciliation between disparate Scottish groups.

Scott works towards reconciliations in both his fiction and his actions, but the middle ground his characters reach often seems to bear the tensions of conflicts in Scott’s own political beliefs. For example, in *Waverley*, as discussed earlier, Scott in many ways portrays the Union in a positive light. However, it is also clear that he is not completely comfortable with political power shifting from Scotland to London.

Characters such as Mrs. Howden in *Heart of Mid-Lothian* complain:

I dinna ken muckle about the law, [...] but I ken, when we had a king, and a chancellor, and parliament men o' our ain, we could aye peeble them wi' stanes when they werena gude bairns—But naeboddy's nails can reach the length o' Lunnon.<sup>40</sup>

Scott often seems to criticize this move of political power. In *Rob Roy*, for instance, the gardener Andrew Fairservice questions the Union with equal vigor. The narrator explains Andrew’s opinions:

That it was an unco change to hae Scotland's laws made in England; and that, for his share, he wadna for a' the herring-barrels in Glasgow, and a' the tobacco-casks to boot, hae gien up the riding o' the Scots Parliament, or sent awa' our crown, and our sword, and our sceptre, and Mons Meg, to be keepit by thae English pock-puddings in the Tower o' Lunnon.<sup>41</sup>

There are, I think, two primary reasons Scott has his characters question a Union that he supported so strenuously. The first recalls Scott’s continuous attempts at reconciliation, finding a middle ground. By questioning the Union through his characters, he avoids the risk of alienating its critics. The other reason that characters such as Mrs. Howden and Andrew Fairservice are so critical is that Scotland in Union with England created a conflict for Scott concerning the national identity of his native Scotland.

Scott understood the significant role the alliance with England held for Scotland’s future, and he strongly supported that union, but in many ways, his support for the Union was pragmatic. The Union offered a legal and economic framework that provided

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<sup>39</sup> W. T. Fyfe, *Edinburgh under Sir Walter Scott* (London: Archibald Constable and Co., 1906), p. 266.

<sup>40</sup> *EEWN*, VI, p. 37.

<sup>41</sup> *EEWN*, V, p. 221-22.

security for the nation, not only financially, but also, and importantly, in terms of national defense. Yet Scott also recognized the importance of supporting a unique Scottish identity that could be separated from England's own identity. Scotland's distinctive character was just as important for the future of the country as was the Union. On the one hand, there is a stability gained with the Union, a stability that provided a 'satisfaction at the peace, prosperity, and progress' of Scotland.<sup>42</sup> On the other hand, however, there is at work a tribal mentality, an 'us' versus 'them' type of attitude that fosters a unique Scottish 'us' separate from 'them' of England.

In this sense, Scott's political stance anticipates modern debates concerning Scottish Independence. Proponents of 'Better Together' outline a number of reasons for Scotland to remain in the United Kingdom, including a stronger economy, strong cultural ties, the question of an independent Scotland's place in international politics, the uncertainty of the currency Scotland would use, unsustainable levels of public spending in an independent state, international influence, and stability.<sup>43</sup> These are certainly some of the same pragmatics that Scott has in mind when he so strenuously defends the Union. For example, in 1826, a series of banking crises in England led the government to overhaul the banking system. As part of this overhaul, the British government drafted a plan that would disallow Scottish banks from issuing certain notes. Scott felt that such a move would devastate the economy in Scotland and lead to an economic depression. In a series of letters addressed to the editor of the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal*, signed by Malachi Malagrowther, a name Scott adopted from a character in *The Fortunes of Nigel*, Scott was extremely critical of the proposed changes, but writes:

We had better remain in union with England, even at the risk of becoming a subordinate species of Northumberland, as far as national consequence is concerned, than remedy ourselves by even hinting the possibility of a rupture.<sup>44</sup>

Pragmatic indeed. Scott situates the stability of Scotland squarely on the Union with England. In fact, in his defense of the Scottish banking system, Scott turns to the

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<sup>42</sup> Daiches, p. 836.

<sup>43</sup> Libby Brooks, Severin Carrell, and the Guardian Interactive Team, 'Scottish Independence: Everything You Need to Know about the Vote', *The Guardian*, 9 September 2014, section Politics <<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/sep/09/-sp-scottish-independence-everything-you-need-to-know-vote>> [accessed 31 October 2016].

<sup>44</sup> Sir Walter Scott, *A Letter to the Editor of the Edinburgh Weekly Journal, from Malachi Malagrowther, Esq. on the Proposed Change of Currency and Other Late Alterations, as They Affect, or Are Intended to Affect the Kingdom of Scotland*, 3rd edn (Edinburgh: William Blackwood; London: T. Cadell, 1826), pp. 17–18.

wording of the Treaty of Union in declaring it unlawful for the Parliament of Great Britain to alter Scottish law unless the changes were beneficial to the Scottish people. Scott successfully argued that the proposed banking changes would harm the Scottish economy and the people of Scotland. For Scott, the dissolution of the Union would be just as harmful to the wealth and prosperity of his native country as would be economic depression.

Of course, modern pro-Union arguments rely heavily on economic and cultural stability, but there is also an emotional side to their arguments. In a 2012 speech in Edinburgh, David Cameron said, ‘The United Kingdom is not just some sort of deal, to be reduced to the lowest common denominator. It is a precious thing; it is about our history, our values, our shared identity and our joint place in the world’. Although Scott certainly would agree on the practical reasons for the Union, he likely would have disagreed with Cameron’s statements. In the very same letter from Malagrowther that defends Scotland’s role in the Union quoted above, Scott continues with a qualifier:

But there is no harm in wishing Scotland to have just so much ill-nature, according to her own proverb, as may keep her good-nature from being abused; so much national spirit as may determine her to stand by her own rights, conducting her assertion of them with every feeling of respect and amity towards England.<sup>45</sup>

This passage, of course, sounds more similar to the rhetoric coming from the opposing Yes Scotland camp. In the months leading up to the 2014 Scottish Independence referendum, Alex Salmond said, ‘We unite behind a declaration of self-evident truth: the people who live in Scotland are best placed to make the decisions that affect Scotland’. Sharing the stage with Salmond, film and theater star Alan Cumming said, ‘I believe independence can only add to our potential and realize a whole new wave of creativity, ambition, confidence and pride’.<sup>46</sup> Arguments for leaving the UK from groups such as the National Collective include the potential for a Scottish ‘cultural and political

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<sup>45</sup> David Cameron, speech delivered in Edinburgh on 16 February 2012. Full transcript available through the UK Government website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/transcript-pm-scotland-speech>.

<sup>46</sup> Brian Currie, “‘Scotland’s Future Will Be in Scotland’s Hands’”, *Herald Scotland*, 26 May 2012, Online edition  
<[http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/13059328.\\_Scotland\\_s\\_future\\_will\\_be\\_in\\_Scotland\\_s\\_hands\\_/](http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/13059328._Scotland_s_future_will_be_in_Scotland_s_hands_/>)>  
[accessed 19 October 2016].

reawakening'.<sup>47</sup> National pride, confidence, ambition, a cultural and political identity separate from England; these could very well have been Scott's own words. However, Scott likely would not have supported a referendum for an independent Scotland, even though he was certainly in favor of creating a unique Scotland. In the introduction to *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* he writes, 'I may contribute somewhat to the history of my native country; the peculiar features of whose manners and character are daily melting and dissolving into those of her sister and ally'.<sup>48</sup> Again, in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, he writes:

Breathes there the man,  
With soul so dead,  
Who never to himself hath said,  
This is my own, my native land!

For Scott, this was Scotland: 'O Caledonia, stern and wild, | Meet nurse for a poetic child'.<sup>49</sup> Contribute to the history of his native country is exactly what Scott did when King George IV visited Scotland in 1822. Scott saw this visit as an opportunity to both support the Crown and celebrate Scottish traditions, thus working towards uniting the Scottish people. He put on a show, parading Highland clans dressed in kilts through the streets of Edinburgh. Even the King wore a kilt. Scott used the King's visit to both create a unique Scottish identity and to promote loyalty to the Hanoverian regime.<sup>50</sup>

A successful Union also meant a reconciliation between the English and the Scots. In his short story *The Two Drovers*, Scott again turns to his Gothic imagination to underscore the negative consequences of a rupture of the Union, the consequences of failed reconciliation. Robin Oig M'Combich, a Highland cattle drover, and Harry Wakefield, an English drover, manage to become very good friends as they drive their cattle together through the English countryside. Yet due to their differing beliefs and cultural backgrounds, their friendship is fragile. When a dispute arises on the trail concerning the overnight grazing of their cattle, the delicate bond they share becomes fractured. Harry feels as if his friend Robin has mistreated him, and his pride leads him to demand a fistfight, a common English way to settle a dispute. Robin refuses to fight

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<sup>47</sup> Jamie Mann, 'Jamie Mann: Scotland's Cultural and Political Reawakening Has Come Hand in Hand', *National Collective*, 2014 <<http://nationalcollective.com/2014/05/19/jamie-mann-scotlands-cultural-and-political-reawakening-has-come-hand-in-hand>> [accessed 19 October 2016].

<sup>48</sup> Scott, *Minstrelsy*, I, p. cxxxi.

<sup>49</sup> Sir Walter Scott, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel: In Six Cantos.*, 6th ed. (London, Edinburgh: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and A. Constable, 1807), Canto Six, ll. 1–4, 17–18.

<sup>50</sup> Clara Glynn, 'This Land Is Our Land', *A History of Scotland* (BBC Two, 2013).

without a sword, the way disputes would have been resolved in the Highlands. Incensed, the Englishman hits the Scot, who falls to the floor. For Harry, the dispute is settled and the fight is over. However, now Harry has injured Robin's pride, and Robin is determined to settle the conflict the Highland way. He returns and kills his English friend with his Highland dirk. As punishment, the Highlander is executed. Such is the unfortunate outcome of the fighting between the English and the Scots, the death of both Robin and Harry.

The political positions Scott adopts throughout his novels he often frames with a mythical Scotland, and even occasionally a mythical Great Britain. Scott not only created a myth of the Scottish people and a 'place myth' of the Scottish Highlands, but he also created cultural myths, such as kilts, tartans, bagpipes, whisky, and haggis. Of course, Scott did not invent these cultural icons, but his immense international popularity did allow him to place them on a world stage, where they could be embraced by not only Highlanders, Lowlanders, and the rapidly increasing Scottish diaspora, but also the world at large. As Gillian Black and others have pointed out, these mythical icons of Scottish culture became a way for Scots to create a unique identity for a people with no political autonomy or other signifiers of Scottish-ness. In many ways, Scott's iconography traded a Scottish political identity for a cultural one.<sup>51</sup> As Black also notes, Scotland today is at once a country and a brand, thanks in no small part to Scott.

Scott's mythical and romanticized vision of Scotland and her people becomes apparent in many ways throughout his novels, including and perhaps most notably in his depictions of historical events. There are many examples throughout the novels where Scott depicts authentic historical events in a fine detail. I turn to *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* as an early example, published as a multi-volume set in 1818. The title refers to the Tolbooth Prison that was located in Edinburgh adjacent to St. Giles Cathedral on the Royal Mile. The prison, nicknamed 'The Heart of Mid-Lothian', was demolished in 1817, the year before Scott's novel was published. *Mid-Lothian* combines two unrelated historical events that fictitiously merge in the Tolbooth. The first, which occupies the first volume of the novel, details the Porteous Riots in Edinburgh in 1736. In April of that year, a riot broke out over the public execution of several smugglers. In an attempt to control the angry mob, Captain John Porteous, who was the Captain of the City

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<sup>51</sup> Gillian Black, and others, 'Scotland the Brand: Marketing the Myth?', *Scottish Affairs*, 24.1 (2015), 47–77 (p. 51) <<https://doi.org/10.3366/scot.2015.0053>> [accessed 2 January 2019].

Guards, ordered his men to fire into the crowd, killing several people. A jury found him guilty of murder and he was sent to the Tolbooth. Following a short trial, he was sentenced to execution. However, several months later Queen Caroline intervened and issued a reprieve. Upon hearing this declaration, an angry crowd attacked the prison and brutally murdered Captain Porteous.<sup>52</sup> In Scott's novel, one of the leaders of the mob who attacked the Tolbooth was also seeking to free his lover Effie Deans, who had been wrongly accused of murdering her own child. The scene of the storming of the prison and the murder of Porteous segues into the second historical event, which occupies the second volume of the novel. These events involve Effie's sister Jeanie Deans and her arduous journey to London in order to gain an audience with the Queen to plea for her sister's life.<sup>53</sup> Jeanie's courageous walk to London is based on the 'real-life' story of Helen Walker, though Scott romanticizes the story. Walker is rumored to have walked to London to plead for the life of her sister, Isobell Walker, who was actually imprisoned for (and probably guilty of) infanticide.<sup>54</sup> Isobell did, in fact, avoid execution, though it is unknown exactly how.

What stands out in Scott's depictions of these two events, the Porteous Riots and Walker's journey, is the ease with which he marries fiction with historical facts. This is a characteristic found in many of Scott's novels, as Lukács points out, that allows critics to label his novels as historical fiction. Interweaving actual historical events with fictional characters and personal journeys is also a characteristic of Scott's novels that leads Lukács to see in Scott the 'great objectivity of the great epic writer' who portrays 'the struggles and antagonisms of history by means of characters who, in their psychology and destiny, always represent social trends and historical forces'.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, Scott's novels often depict critical moments in history, as seen through the eyes of the common people, and explore how these key moments affect the wider social and political landscapes. Conflicting cultural, political, and social views often confront the protagonists, forcing

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<sup>52</sup> 'Porteous Riots', *Encyclopedia Britannica* <<https://www.britannica.com/event/Porteous-Riots>> [accessed 19 April 2017].

<sup>53</sup> *EEWN*, vi.

<sup>54</sup> 'Helen Walker', *Women of Scotland* <<http://womenofscotland.org.uk/women/helen-walker>> [accessed 31 August 2016].

<sup>55</sup> Gyorgy Lukács, *The Historical Novel*, trans. by Hannah Mitchell and Stanley Mitchell (London: Merlin Press, 1962), p. 34.



them to examine their own beliefs from a new perspective. Particularly in the novels set in Scotland, Scott often portrays these events through the lens of a mythical Scotland, typically an older, more heroic, and chivalric Scotland. Even in many of the novels set outside of Scotland, Scottish affairs or Scottish characters often play important roles.<sup>56</sup>

The historical moments that Scott chooses to set as the backdrops for his novels are often periods when society is undergoing fundamental cultural and political changes: Jacobite uprisings, the Porteous Riot, the Acts of Union, the Popish Plot, the Killing Time, The Glorious Revolution, the Crusades, just to name a few. In these novels, there is typically little need for Scott to alter the historical events themselves, at least not drastically, because he peoples the historic event in a way that frames his political or social narratives in a mythical or romantic way. In other words, the moments in time in which Scott stages his actions are less indicative of what Scotland was really like and offer a skewed view of a mythical Scotland through the characters he creates and their actions. As Stuart Kelly points out, ‘Scotland was monotonous and destitute, Scott-land was magical and hidden. It was everywhere around you and nowhere to be found’.<sup>57</sup> Again, the Gothic mode portrays Scott’s political tensions in specific ways. In staging the violent Porteous Riots, for example, Scott depicts an Edinburgh populace disgruntled, initially, with new hefty taxes levied on Scottish goods following the Union. Many of the citizens of Edinburgh were sympathetic to the smugglers. In fact, the riots were instigated by the way Porteous was mistreating one of the smugglers while carrying out that smuggler’s execution. However, the violent murder of Porteous himself underlines a deeper political crisis in Scotland following the Acts of Union. The crowd that storms the Tolbooth and murders Porteous is angered that parliamentary powers have shifted to London, and is outraged when the Crown exerts its power to save Captain Porteous, who had murdered their fellow citizens. Mr. Plumdamas scorns, ‘this reprieve wadna stand gude in the auld Scot’s law, when the kingdom *was* a kingdom’. Miss Damahoy says that she is ‘Weary on Lunnon, and a’ that e’er came out o’t! They taen awa our Parliament, and they hae oppressed our trade’. Mrs. Howden, reflecting that her

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<sup>56</sup> In *The Fortunes of Nigel*, for example, even though the action mainly takes place in and around London, the Scottish lands of a young nobleman are at stake. The plot of *Quentin Durward* focuses on the Fifteenth century rivalry between Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, and Louis XI of France, but the Scottish guards that protect Louis and the eponymous Durward, a poor Scottish archer, play prominent roles in the story. Likewise, *The Talisman* focuses on the Third Crusade and is set in Syria, but the protagonist is a poor Scottish knight, Sir Kenneth. These are only a few examples.

<sup>57</sup> Stuart Kelly, *Scott-Land: The Man Who Invented a Nation* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 2010), p. 145.

daughter had been in harm's way when Porteous and his troops began firing on innocent civilians, asks 'I wonder how Queen Carline (if her name be Carline) wad hae liked to hae had and o' her ain bairns in sic a venture?' So disconnected are the Edinburgh citizens from their ruling body that they are not even sure of the Queen's name. As such, the mob that storms the Tolbooth and murders Captain Porteous is, in fact, a heroic group of burghers standing up for their beliefs and taking matters into their own hands through a violent response to English hegemony. David Brown is quite right in declaring 'the [Porteous] rising is a matter of Scottish national pride'.<sup>58</sup> Even in the act of brutal violence, Scott frames the crowd not merely as an unruly and violent mob, but also as romantic national heroes.

Scott's depiction of the Porteous Riots, like so many other scenes throughout his novels, also signals his own political tensions. On the one hand, he seems to commend the rioters for standing up for Scotland's rights. The Queen, in their view, had overstepped her license in reprieving Porteous. After all, he had murdered citizens of Edinburgh, not London. On the other hand, however, Scott was against violence and mobs, and he was an ardent supporter of the Union. As such, Scott must reconcile the tensions of presenting an Edinburgh mob as heroes. As is typical in many of Scott's works, this reconciliation comes from the fact that the events that took place in and around the prison, and in fact the prison itself, are vestiges of the past. As Fleishman correctly notes, the scenes at the Tolbooth serve to signal that 'the time of grand crimes and grand punishments has passed'. The Tolbooth had been demolished the year before the publication of Scott's novel. As the novel progresses, the action moves away from the Tolbooth and shifts to Jeanie as she travels to London. Jeanie Deans and her courageous walk to London from her humble abode in Dumfriesshire exemplify the courage and fortitude of the Scottish character. The Tolbooth prison no longer represents the heart of Mid-Lothian; it is replaced with the heart of Jeanie Deans:<sup>59</sup>

Jeanie Deans becomes the voice of the true Scotland, speaking from the grassroots locus of the peasantry. The virtuous peasant stock which has produced Jeanie is one of the primary sources from which Scott believes the regeneration of Scotland, and by implication the kingdom as a whole, must come.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> David D. Brown, *Walter Scott and the Historical Imagination* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), p. 116.

<sup>59</sup> Avrom Fleishman, *The English Historical Novel: Walter Scott to Virginia Woolf* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), p. 79.

<sup>60</sup> Kerr, p. 802.

Jeanie is highly religious, and honesty is one of her key virtues. She certainly had the opportunity to save her sister long before embarking on her journey to London. The court does not need to prove that Effie had murdered her child, the simple facts that she did not confide her pregnancy to anyone and she was unable to produce the child was evidence enough for her to be executed under the strict Scottish law. All Jeanie must do is lie at the trial and swear that Effie had informed her that she was pregnant, and Effie would have been set free. Her religiously devout father even encourages her to do so, creating a moral dilemma for Jeanie:

“Can this be?” said Jeanie, as the door closed on her father—“Can these be his words that I have heard, or has the Enemy taken his voice and features to give weight unto the counsel which causeth to perish?—a sister’s life, and a father pointing out how to save it!—O God, deliver me!—this is a fearful temptation.”

Jeanie's character and deep religious beliefs do not allow her to lie, even if it would mean saving her sister's life. When Effie asks Jeanie to lie, Jeanie tells her that lying 'is a grievous sin, and it's a deeper offence when it's a sin wilfully and presumptuously committed'.<sup>61</sup> Instead, Jeanie courageously travels to London to ask the Queen to free Effie. Even though the Queen may have been wrong to offer Porteous a temporary reprieve, the modern Crown, the post-Union Crown, also sees the injustice of Effie's death sentence, and grants her a pardon for the charges levied against her. What Scott's Gothic novel does particularly well here is juxtapose both the brutal violence of the mob at the Porteous Riots and the unfairness of the Crown in reprieving Captain Porteous in the first section of *Heart of Mid-Lothian* with the bravery and fortitude of Jeanie Deans and her arduous journey and the leniency of the Queen in the latter half of the novel. Violence is no longer the proper way to deal with British rule, nor is violence needed. The modern Crown, Scott shows his readers, is lenient and fair to the citizens of Scotland. Thus, there is certainly no reason to dissolve or even question such a fruitful and beneficial Union.

Though the example of Scott's use of historical events in *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* outlined above provides a somewhat crude and perhaps simplistic view of Scott's genius in combining history and fiction in a way that romanticizes Scotland and Scots, it does offer a rough model for comparing some of his works in which he treats history with much less precision. In fact, it is in the novels that alter history the most that the

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<sup>61</sup> *EEWN*, VI, pp. 182, 189.

fundamental structure of the ‘historical novel’ occasionally comes under direct threat, seemingly losing the very characteristics that Lukács so admired in Scott’s novels. In *Redgauntlet*, for example, Scott again turns to Jacobite uprisings, a backdrop that had proven successful in both *Waverley* (set during the 1745 uprising) and *The Black Dwarf* (set during the 1707 uprising).<sup>62</sup> Both of these novels stage Scott’s political tensions between his support for the Union and his desire to preserve Scottish national character. *Redgauntlet*, however, focuses on Bonnie Prince Charlie’s return to England in 1765 for one last attempt to claim the crown. Yet there was no Jacobite uprising after 1745. The entire ‘historical’ backdrop of *Redgauntlet* is fictional, and in many ways conflicts with the very idea of historical fiction. Robert C. Gordon recognizes this conflict and asks, ‘what are we to make of *Redgauntlet* where a rebellion that never occurred is defeated by an imagined act of royal forgiveness?’<sup>63</sup> Indeed, Gordon makes an interesting point. If Scott’s novels portray ‘the struggles and antagonisms of history’, what is one to make of *Redgauntlet* and the completely fictionalized ‘history’ that it purports to reveal? The fictionalized history in *Redgauntlet* proves an excellent example of why we should be cautious when relying on fiction alone to untangle Scott’s complex political ideologies and why more precisely defining these ideologies becomes so important in this study.

However, what we see in the fictionalized history in *Redgauntlet* is Scott’s Gothic imagination at work once again. Defending himself against criticisms of historical inaccuracies, Scott writes in a footnote in *Ivanhoe*:

neither will I allow that the author of a modern antique romance is obliged to confine himself to the introduction of those manners only which can be proved to have absolutely existed in the times he is depicting, so that he restrain himself to such as are plausible and natural, and contain no obvious anachronism.<sup>64</sup>

For Scott, portraying historical accuracy is less important than portraying plausible characters that can promote his political ideologies. Though the historical ‘facts’ of *Redgauntlet* are fictional, the novel is peopled with characters who would not only be at home in 1765 Scotland but who can also promote Scott’s message that the Jacobite cause is a relic of the past and that it is finally over for the last time. The supporters of the House of Stuart must transition from the old feudal ways of Scotland’s past to a more

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<sup>62</sup> *Waverley* is set during the Jacobite uprising in 1745, while *The Black Dwarf* is set during the first Jacobite uprising following the Union in 1707.

<sup>63</sup> Robert C. Gordon, *Under Which King? A Study of Scottish Waverley Novels* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1969), p. 165.

<sup>64</sup> *EEWN*, xxvb, p. 19.

progressive, modern way of life. Redgauntlet, the leader of the Jacobite cause, is unable to gain enough support for an uprising. He has difficulty connecting with the younger Darsie and Fairford, who both attempt to extricate themselves from the rebellion. Once Redgauntlet realizes that there is no hope for another Jacobite rebellion, he goes into exile with Charles Edward Stuart. Darsie and Fairford both become staunch supporters of the House of Hanover. Scott creates a romanticized vision of Scots here to advance his political agenda.

Presenting a romantic version of Scotland to his audience was important to Scott, so much so that some critics have suggested that his novels were merely an excuse for him to market the myth of Scotland and her people. In *Peperil of the Peak*, for example, Scott begins Chapter 15 with a long digression from the storyline in order to romantically portray one of the ‘extraordinary monuments of antiquity’<sup>65</sup> so ubiquitous on the Isle of Man. This digression is a full two pages, with a further two-page footnote. Such digressions from the story and Scott’s presentation of a mythical Scotland have certainly attracted criticism. Edwin Muir, for instance, is quite critical of Scott. Though he recognizes Scott’s genius, he insists that Scott painted an unrealistic picture of Scotland, claiming that his novels consisted ‘of flesh and blood and pasteboard’.<sup>66</sup> Muir even goes so far as to call Scott (and Burns) ‘sham bards of a sham nation’.<sup>67</sup> Launching a similar criticism, David Brown claims that the entire plot to *The Pirate* ‘is merely an excuse for Scott to embark on an antiquarian comment’. The character of the self-proclaimed ‘Sovereign of the Seas and Winds’, Norna of the Fitful-Head, he insists, is as implausible as the supernatural dwarf that guards her. Further, Brown accuses Scott of ‘fall[ing] back on Gothic horrors, spurious romance, and antiquarian curiosities’ to sustain *The Pirate*.<sup>68</sup>

To call Scott a sham bard or to criticize his use of Scottish folklore is, I think, to read Scott somewhat out of context. If he was marketing a myth through his novels, as I certainly believe he was, then it was a myth that was as real and as tangible to him as were any of the items in his vast collection of historical trinkets, including the original

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<sup>65</sup> *EEWN*, XIV; XXvb, pp. 246-50.

<sup>66</sup> Edwin Muir, *Scott and Scotland: The Predicament of the Scottish Writer* (Edinburgh: Polygon Books, 1982), p. 108.

<sup>67</sup> *The Complete Poems of Edwin Muir*, ed. by Peter Butter (Aberdeen: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 1991), p. 100.

<sup>68</sup> Brown, p. 187.

door to the Tolbooth Prison that he had mounted in Abbotsford. Scott mentions the Tolbooth door nine times in *Mid-Lothian*. In one instance he writes:

Butler, who in great terror and anxiety, had been detained within a few yards of the Tolbooth door, to wait the event of the search after Porteous, was now brought forward, and commanded to walk by the prisoner's side, and to prepare him for immediate death.<sup>69</sup>

In this scene, Butler places his own life at risk as he tries to reason with the angry mob, a scene that unfolds only steps from the very door that Scott has mounted in the wall of his own Gothic castle Abbotsford. When Scott wrote this passage, he could have very well been staring at the door itself. However, Scott does not simply see a door; he sees a romantic Scottish history and all of the associated human struggles.

Such sentiment is indicative of Scott's view of history and, in fact, of Scotland. He truly saw Scotland as a mythical land, a fact that becomes apparent in 1814, just after *Waverley* was published. In July of that year, Scott accepted an invitation from the Commissioners of Northern Lights to tour the northern coasts of Scotland as they sought new areas to build lighthouses. Along with Scott, also on board was Robert Stevenson, the famous civil engineer who had designed numerous bridges and lighthouses. Also accompanying Scott and Stevenson were several of Scott's friends, including William Erskine, Robert Hamilton, and Adam Duff. Scott kept a diary of his travels, a diary that may offer one of the best and perhaps most unclouded views of Scott's romantic sentiments towards his native land. Lockhart first published Scott's record in his *Memoirs of Scott*, and says of the diary:

Written without the least notion probably that it would ever be perused except in his own family circle, it affords such a complete and artless portraiture of the man, as he was in himself, and as he mingled with his friends and companions, at one of the most interesting periods of his life that I am persuaded every reader, will be pleased to see it printed in its original state.<sup>70</sup>

In reading Scott's diary, it becomes immediately obvious that his interests were far from lighthouses or ships. Scott studied the people, the culture, the land, and the history. He was genuinely enchanted by the Scotland he was seeing. Lockhart recounts the words of Scott's friend and traveling partner William Erskine:

I often, on coming up from the cabin at night, found him [Scott] pacing the deck rapidly, muttering to himself—and went to the fore-castle, lest my presence should disturb him. I remember that at

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<sup>69</sup> *EEWN*, VI, p. 59.

<sup>70</sup> Lockhart, III, pp. 134-35.

Loch Corriskin, in particular, he seemed quite overwhelmed with his feelings; and we all saw it, and retiring unnoticed, left him to roam and gaze about by himself, until it was time to muster the party and be gone.<sup>71</sup>

The Scottish landscape had a profound effect on Scott's imagination.

In his diary, Scott writes of an area known as the Fitful-Head, the most southeastern point of the Shetlands and the birthplace of the character Norna in *The Pirate*:

The sea beneath rages incessantly among a thousand of the fragments which have fallen from the peaks, and which assume an hundred strange shapes. It would have been a fine situation to compose an ode to the Genius of Sumburgh-head, or an Elegy upon a Cormorant—or to have written and spoken madness of any kind in prose or poetry. But I gave vent to my excited feelings in a more simple way; and sitting gently down on the steep green slope which led to the beach, I e'en slid down a few hundred feet, and found the exercise quite an adequate vent to my enthusiasm. I recommend this exercise (time and place suiting) to all my brother scribblers, and I have no doubt it will save much effusion of Christian ink.<sup>72</sup>

Though Scott's frolicking did little towards saving Christian ink, this passage from his two-month-long lighthouse tour sheds a somewhat different light on Norna, who Scott created some seven years following this entry. The Fitful-Head was more than simply an interesting landscape; it was a scene that genuinely excited him. Venting his enthusiasm by sliding down a hill only offered a temporary relief of his excitement. Scott eventually had to write about the Fitful-Head, but mere landscape descriptions could hardly give justice to such enthusiasm. He once again turns to his Gothic imagination and assigns a character to the region, a wild, untamed, supernatural character. Scott would come to personify the land in the character of Ulla Troil, better known as Norna of the Fitful-Head, a poor soul who was 'taken from humanity, to be something pre-eminently powerful, pre-eminently wretched'.<sup>73</sup> A witch and a 'wind seller', peddling favorable seas to ships as they pass. There may indeed be characteristics in Norna that are as implausible as Brown suggests, but during his coastal tour, Scott had visited Stromness and met Bessie Millie:

We clomb, by steep and dirty lanes, an eminence rising above the town, and commanding a fine view. An old hag lives in a wretched

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., pp. 169-70.

<sup>73</sup> *EEWN*, xii, p. 186.

cabin on this height, and subsists by selling winds. Each captain of a merchantman, between jest and earnest, gives the old woman sixpence, and she boils her kettle to procure a favourable gale. She was a miserable figure; upwards of ninety, she told us, and dried up like a mummy. A sort of clay-coloured cloak, folded over her head, corresponded in colour to her corpselike complexion.<sup>74</sup>

Bessie told Scott about ‘*Gow the pirate*’, who was the inspiration for Scott’s novel. The Gothic offers Scott a platform to explore and reimagine the wild scenes and people that he met throughout his travels and to recreate them as decidedly Gothic characters in his works of fiction.

Scott obviously evoked memories from his lighthouse tour to help create not only *The Pirate* but also the mythical Norna of the Fitful-Head. He also used that trip to create the dwarf that guarded Norna. Shortly after Scott had met Bessie and learned of the pirate named Gow, he visited the Orkneys and the small island of Hoy, home of the Dwarfie Stane of Hoy. Scott had visited the landmark only days after leaving the Fitful-Head:

The monument is of heathen times, and probably was meant as the temple of some northern edition of the *Dii Manes*. The Orcadians [...] believe it to be the work of a dwarf, to whom, like their ancestors, they attribute supernatural powers and malevolent disposition. They conceive he may be seen sometimes sitting at the door of his abode, but he vanishes on a nearer approach.<sup>75</sup>

Norna describes The Dwarfie Stane in even greater detail in the novel. The landmark is the obvious inspiration for the dwarf in *The Pirate*, and one can also find traits of Elshender the Recluse, or the Black Dwarf, in Scott’s description of the Dwarfie Stane. The Gothic works in a unique way here by allowing Scott to draw on Scottish myth and legend in order to create a cultural identity for Scotland that had nothing to do with England. It is Scott’s Gothic imagination that can transform Bessie the wind seller of Stromness into the supernatural Norna of the Fitful-Head, an imagination that can convert a landmark on a remote island in the Orkney’s into a supernatural dwarf.

Even though Scott mythologizes Scotland and the people of Scotland, also remarkable in his writings are concerns about a government that the masses usurp, by the desperate rabble and unwashed artificers of Scotland’s working class. For Scott, there was certainly the possibility of a failed government, and regardless of whether that failure was to come via the violence of revolution or the radicalism of reformation, he

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<sup>74</sup> Lockhart, III, p. 203.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 200.



committed himself to support the existing state of affairs and to resist changes that he felt would fuel either proletariat uprisings or political fanaticism. Scott had little recourse in the shifting currents of voter reformation, despite his efforts. However, he did work tirelessly towards averting civil deterioration and revolution through reconciliations. He constantly tried to temper anxieties, through both his writings as well as his actions. In promoting traditional Scottish values, for example, he also praised the Crown. In supporting the Hanoverian regime, he carefully circumvented offending the Jacobites. In defending Highland pride, he avoided ridiculing English custom. Scott constantly searched for a middle ground to temper anxieties of civil unrest and a usurped Scottish government. It is only through an examination of his fiction and his nonfiction that his political concerns become clearer. As I will show in the following pages, Poe's political concerns also have to do with social deterioration and mob rule in America.

### **'Democratic Rabble', the Mob, and Poe's Political Skepticism**

I began this chapter with a quotation from Poe's short story 'Some Words with a Mummy' because I believe that in many ways, this quotation epitomizes Poe's view of politicians and the political system of America as cartoonish. Largely due to his mistrust and skepticism of American Democracy, Poe, like Scott, also frequently expressed concerns about civil unrest and mob rule. 'In drawing a line of distinction between a people and a mob', he writes in 'Marginalia', 'we shall find that a people aroused to action are a mob; and that a mob, trying to think, subside into a people'.<sup>76</sup> Mobs and civil disorder, people aroused to action, are common throughout much of Poe's writings, such as 'The Man of the Crowd', which is discussed in much more detail in a later chapter, but also in short stories such as 'Mellonta Tauta', 'The Colloquy of Monos and Una', and 'Some Words with a Mummy', just to name a few. Like Scott, Poe also saw corruption at the heart of civil disorder, yet for Poe, the threat came in the form of democracy. 'A republican government', Pundita would write in her journal, 'could never be anything but a rascally one'. The politics of democracy for Poe necessarily lead to corruption. Commenting on political corruption in New York, he writes:

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<sup>76</sup> Mabbott, III, p. 380.

When the question is asked — “cannot these scoundrels be made to suffer for their high-handed speculation?” — the reply is invariably — “oh no — to be sure not — the thing is expected, and will only be laughed at as an excellent practical joke. The comers-in to office will be in too high glee to be severe, and as for the turned-out, it is no longer any business of theirs”.<sup>77</sup>

This, of course, is only one of many examples of Poe’s criticism of American politics and democracy. In fact, so critical was Poe of the American political system that he has been labeled an anti-American and has been accused of being ‘bitterly hostile’<sup>78</sup> towards democracy.

F. O. Matthiessen’s formative work *American Renaissance* (1941) provides an excellent example of how critics have approached Poe’s stance towards early American concepts of democracy. Matthiessen’s work has been extremely influential and a critical study of American literature and, in many ways, has been instrumental in the formation of an American literary canon. Recent editors of the *Norton Anthology of American Literature* suggest:

The 1941 publication of F. O. Matthiessen’s *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* helped to establish the writers in this volume as pioneers of American literary nationalism who helped shape American literature for the next two centuries.<sup>79</sup>

Perhaps one of the most intriguing and significant aspects of Matthiessen’s seminal work is not in the writers that he discusses: Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, Hawthorne, and Melville. Indeed, one would not be surprised to discover these authors in a survey of important American literary texts. Perhaps surprising, however, are the authors he chose to exclude, particularly Poe. Many modern scholars have recognized Poe as a cornerstone of American literary expression, yet at least according to Matthiessen, Poe is not one of the ‘pioneers of American literary nationalism’. It would be untrue to say that Matthiessen completely ignores Poe. In fact, he mentions him a number of times

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<sup>77</sup> Edgar Allan Poe, ‘Doings of Gotham’ [Letter II], *Columbia Spy* (Columbia, PA, 25 May 1844), 15.5, p. 3, The Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore <<http://www.eapoe.org/works/misc/gothamb2.htm>>.

<sup>78</sup> F. O. Matthiessen, *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* (Oxford: OUP, 1941), p. xii, n. 3.

<sup>79</sup> Nina Baym, ‘Norton Anthology of American Literature, 7th Edition’, 2007 <<http://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/naal7/contents/B/welcome.asp>> [accessed 27 August 2015].

throughout his survey<sup>80</sup> but fails to give him any lengthy attention, as he does these other five writers. In a footnote, Matthiessen attempts to justify not fully exploring the Gothic writer:

The reason is more fundamental than that his work fell mainly in the decade 1835-45; for it relates at very few points to the main assumptions about literature that were held by any of my group. Poe was bitterly hostile to democracy, and in that respect could serve as a revelatory contrast. [...] My reluctance at not dealing with Poe here is tempered by the fact that his value [...] is now seen to consist in his influence rather than in the body of his own work. No group of his poems seems as enduring as *Drum-Taps*; and his stories, less harrowing upon the nerves than they were, seem relatively factitious when contrasted to the moral depth of Hawthorne or Melville.<sup>81</sup>

Matthiessen's justifications for excluding Poe are as intriguing as the exclusion itself. What we understand from Matthiessen's footnote is that he omits an in-depth discussion of Poe because Poe does not properly fit his group's assumptions of what literature should be or what it should accomplish, his influence on other writers has been more significant than his own works, and his writings lack a 'moral depth'. Importantly, Matthiessen also sees in Poe a hostility towards American ideas of democracy. Of course, some of these arguments may seem somewhat ridiculous to modern scholars. There can be no doubt that Poe demonstrably influenced a number of authors that followed him, but it is also evident that his own works are important to the American literary tradition as well as to the Gothic, Science Fiction, and Detective genres at the very least. Arguments claiming that Poe's works lack a moral depth also seem like a poor reason to exclude the author, at least by modern scholarly critical standards. Yet for Matthiessen, Poe's hostility towards democracy alone may be justification for excluding him from a survey dedicated to present American writers who symbolize Matthiessen's own perceptions of American ideologies. Poe represents a 'revelatory contrast' to the arguably jingoistic authors that Matthiessen does canonize, the five that 'wrote literature *for* democracy' (my emphasis).<sup>82</sup> It may not be difficult to understand Matthiessen's

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<sup>80</sup> The index of Matthiessen's work references Poe no fewer than 27 times. However, outside of general discussions, these references are mostly related to Poe's position in relation to other authors, with subtitles under the entry for Poe such as 'praise of Hawthorne', or 'Whitman on' (p. 674). Matthiessen does not fail to employ Poe as an authority to praise Hawthorne, ensuring the reader understands that Poe refers to Hawthorne's style of writing as 'purity itself' (p. 206), while the chapter on Whitman underscores Whitman's depiction of Poe as a figure 'almost without the first sign of moral principle' (pp. 540-41).

<sup>81</sup> Matthiessen, p. xii, n. 3.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. xv.

position, given Poe's criticism of early American politics. However, it is important to consider the term 'democracy' more carefully here.

The idea of democracy in early nineteenth century America was complicated, and I can only briefly summarize it here as it pertains to Poe's criticisms. Democracy was but a set of ideas and untested concepts on how to run a government more focused on the common citizen. In fact, the founders of the United States had no intentions of creating a democracy at all. They clearly constructed a republic, which bears a distinction from a democracy. Even though the citizens elect the government in both a democracy and a republic, in a democracy the majority rules according to their impulses. In a republic, however, the government rules according to a set of laws, such as the Constitution. The Founding Fathers of the United States framed the Constitution to provide certain rights and protections to individuals and to limit the power of government. In other words, God grants each person certain rights, and the Constitution protects these rights, regardless of a majority vote. The United States Constitution clearly states, 'The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government'.<sup>83</sup> In his political essay 'A Dissertation on the Canon and the Feudal Law', America's second President John Adams vocalizes a Republican ideology, insisting that people have rights 'antecedent to all earthly governments; rights that cannot be repealed or restrained by human laws; rights derived from the Great Legislator of the Universe'.<sup>84</sup> The government's job was to protect these individual rights, not to determine through majority vote which rights to protect and which to ignore. In a democracy, however, the majority decides what rights people are to have. The majority wields the power and control over the minority. It was during Poe's lifetime that the American Republic began a move towards democracy. In fact, many regard Andrew Jackson as the first United States President to mainstream democracy by shifting power to the majority through party policies such as the expansion of suffrage and through his attempts to rid the government of class bias.

Poe may or may not have known the technical differences between a democracy and a republic, but there is no doubt that he witnessed changes in American politics that

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<sup>83</sup> 'Transcript of the Constitution of the United States - Official Text', *The Charters of Freedom*, pt. IV, Sect. IV <[http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution\\_transcript.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_transcript.html)> [accessed 11 March 2016].

<sup>84</sup> John Adams, 'A Dissertation on the Canon and the Feudal Law', *National Archives: Founders Online* <<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/06-01-02-0052-0003>> [accessed 25 February 2016].

shifted power from the educated aristocracy to the 'Democratic rabble'. This shift of power to the majority was an enormous issue for Poe, as he felt democracy was a threat to individualism. What Poe perceived as an attack on his individual rights also explains his hostility towards reform and universal suffrage. I further explore Poe's concerns in this regard later in this chapter, but first I want to discuss some criticisms of Poe's political position and frame these criticisms within the early nineteenth-century American political arena.

Matthiessen has certainly not been the only critic to suggest that Poe was unpatriotic or un-American, or that he in some ways represents the antithesis of American ideological values as demonstrated by Hawthorne or Melville, or, in fact, any of the 'Frogpondians'.<sup>85</sup> As Goldbaek notes, 'Many critics, even in Poe's lifetime, admitted his skillfulness as a poet, but also felt that he was an enemy of American democracy and of good taste in the Longfellow or Alcott manner'.<sup>86</sup> James A. Harrison submits that Poe was 'the most un-American [...] man of his time'.<sup>87</sup> Vernon Parrington asserts that Poe 'lies quite outside the main current of American thought'.<sup>88</sup> It has even been insinuated that Poe was the grandson of Benedict Arnold, the infamous American traitor.<sup>89</sup>

It certainly seems as though there is ample evidence to support accusations that Poe was hostile towards the same ideas of democracy held by many other American writers of his time. His views on 'the horrid laws of political economy'<sup>90</sup> were indeed far from mainstream. By way of example, Pundita writes in her journal in Poe's short story 'Mellonta Tauta':

He [Pundit] has been occupied all the day in the attempt to convince me that the ancient Amriccans governed themselves!- did ever anybody hear of such an absurdity?- that they existed in a sort of every-man-for-himself confederacy, after the fashion of the "prairie

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<sup>85</sup> 'Frogpondians' was a derogatory term that Poe used to describe the Boston literati, particularly the Transcendentalists. Most notable of the Frogpondians were Thoreau and Emerson, two of the main writers discussed by Matthiessen.

<sup>86</sup> Henning Goldbaek, 'Poe in Progress: A Reappraisal', *American Studies in Scandinavia*, 23.2 (1991), 105-27 (p. 106).

<sup>87</sup> Harrison, VIII, pp. ix-x.

<sup>88</sup> Vernon Louis Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought: An Interpretation of American Literature from the Beginning to 1920*, 3 vols. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1927), II, p. 56.

<sup>89</sup> Sarah H. Whitman to John Henry Ingram, 7 December 1875, John Henry Ingram's Poe Collection, Accession # 38-135, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, VA, 270-5. This is a controversial claim, and Whitman provides no evidence whatsoever for this accusation.

<sup>90</sup> Harrison, X, p. 147.

dogs" that we read of in fable. Every man "voted," as they called it- that is to say meddled with public affairs- until at length, it was discovered that what is everybody's business is nobody's, and that the 'Republic' (so the absurd thing was called) was without a government at all.<sup>91</sup>

Pundita ridicules the absurdity of the democratic vote and suggests that the ancient Americans were incapable of successfully running the government. The ubiquity of criticisms of democracy and American politics throughout Poe's works fuel accusations claiming him to be hostile towards early American concepts of democracy.

Poe's seemingly antagonistic position, however, needs to be framed within the political arena of Andrew Jackson's America. Poe had witnessed the 'corrupt bargain' in the elections of 1824 when the House of Representatives declared John Quincy Adams as the President despite the fact that Jackson had carried more electoral votes than any of the candidates. Jackson would later claim, 'The people [have] been cheated. Corruptions and intrigues at Washington [...] defeated the will of the people'.<sup>92</sup> The accusations of corruption and the general fiasco of the elections fostered a distrust of democracy throughout much of the country. Even the new President Adams warned of becoming 'palsied by the will of our constituents'.<sup>93</sup> Additionally, Poe was certainly aware of election fraud. Pundita says of democratic elections, 'any desired number of votes might at any time be polled, without the possibility of prevention or even detection, by any party which should be merely villainous enough not to be ashamed of the fraud'.<sup>94</sup>

Jackson would beat out Adams in the following election of 1828, running on a ticket that mostly revolved around cleaning up the corruption in Washington. Following Jackson's successful presidential campaign, a mob descended on Washington to celebrate. Jackson's economic policies were widely thought responsible for the financial boom the country experienced in the early 1830s, and his popularity would keep him in office for two terms. When Jackson reached his Presidential term limit, the party nominated his Vice President and political protégé Martin van Buren to replace him and

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<sup>91</sup> Mabbott, II, p. 1299.

<sup>92</sup> *The Papers of Henry Clay. Volume 7: Secretary of State, January 1, 1828-March 4, 1829*, ed. by Robert Seagar, 10 vols (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1982), VII, p. 179.

<sup>93</sup> John Quincy Adams, 'John Quincy Adams: First Annual Message', 1825

<<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29467>> [accessed 14 September 2015].

<sup>94</sup> Mabbott, III, p. 1300.

won the election of 1836, vowing to follow in the footsteps of his ‘illustrious predecessor’,<sup>95</sup> Andrew Jackson. Van Buren’s presidency was fraught with controversy, mostly over economic policies, but also because he oversaw Native American forced relocation. The public mostly held Van Buren responsible for the financial crisis of 1837, less than one year after he had won the Presidency. The economy was still suffering by the time of the next Presidential election in 1840. These elections were held in the midst of an economic depression, with the Whig party’s candidate William Harrison winning the election over Democratic incumbent Van Buren.

Poe claimed to have supported the Whig party, writing to his friend F. W. Thomas, ‘I battled with right good will for Harrison when opportunity offered’.<sup>96</sup> There is no evidence to support this claim, and it is more likely that Poe made this statement to his friend in hopes of securing a position working for the federal government in the Philadelphia Customs House. In May of 1841, Thomas had all but promised he could get Poe hired into a position there. Harrison’s early death had left John Tyler as the new President, and Thomas had befriended Tyler’s son. Poe felt as though Thomas’s relationship with the President’s son might be an advantage in securing the job. Almost two years later, Poe was still hoping. Tyler, after all, was replacing a number of government employees with his own supporters, an extension of Jackson’s Spoils System. Thomas Smith, the new Customs Collector that Tyler had appointed and the man responsible for hiring workers, outright refused to consider Poe, despite three interviews and the promise of a job. The US Senate ended up rejecting Smith’s appointment as Collector, giving Poe new hope. Calvin Blythe was confirmed as the new Collector, and Poe headed to Washington to plea for the position. Poe was certainly eager to secure a federal job so that he would have ‘something independent of letters for a subsistence’.<sup>97</sup> He spent nearly a week in Washington. Unfortunately, it seems as though much of the time there he spent in a state of inebriation. In a letter to Thomas Clarke in Philadelphia, Poe’s friend J. E. Dow urges Clarke to come to Washington and retrieve Poe:

He [Poe] arrived here a few days since. On the first evening he seemed somewhat excited, having been over-persuaded to take some Port wine. On the second day he kept pretty steady, but since then he

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<sup>95</sup> Martin Van Buren, ‘Inaugural Address (March 4, 1837)’  
<<http://millercenter.org/president/vanburen/speeches/speech-3486>> [accessed 10 September 2015].

<sup>96</sup> *LEAP*, I, p. 288.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 293.

has been, at intervals, quite unreliable. He exposes himself here to those who may injure him very much with the President, and thus prevents us from doing for him what we wish to do and what we can do if he is himself again in Philadelphia. He does not understand the ways of politicians, nor the manner of dealing with them to advantage.<sup>98</sup>

Of course, Poe never received a position in government, despite promises and assurances. He may well have viewed such a long wait and an ultimate refusal as yet another form of political corruption, further fueling his political skepticism.

Such was the state of democracy in Poe's America, a democracy fraught with rigged elections, corruptions, frauds, financial instability, and political favoritism. Democracy was only fit for 'prairie dogs'. Indeed, Poe saw democracy very differently than the Emerson or Thoreau that Matthiessen canonizes. 'The common denominator', Matthiessen says of the five authors he discusses in detail, 'was their devotion to the possibility of democracy'.<sup>99</sup> What Matthiessen might have more accurately said was 'their devotion to the possibility of a *successful* democracy'. Poe was well aware of the possibilities of democracy, but for Poe, these possibilities included the potential for mob-rule, a government controlled by people who were very incapable of making good decisions, and a threat to his individual rights. Just as Scott had feared that corruption would lead to civil unrest and culminate in a desperate rabble running the government, so too did Poe voice similar concerns. For Poe, however, the source of the corruption was, in fact, the government itself. Moreover, Poe, like Scott, also sought to avoid civil unrest and tempered anxieties associated with the failure of democracy through his works. 'The nose of a mob', Poe writes in *Marginalia*, 'is its imagination. By this, at any time, it can be quietly led'.<sup>100</sup> Indeed, Poe would draw on his Gothic imagination to underscore the potential threats of American democracy.

'Mellonta Tauta' is just such a story, 'imaginative'<sup>101</sup> by Poe's own account. It is a story that expresses his skepticism about American government and the unreliable nature of our perceptions of history. The short story presents a satirical look at Poe's present from 2,000 years in the future, and it represents a vision of how people of the future

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<sup>98</sup> Harrison, xvii, pp. 381-82.

<sup>99</sup> Matthiessen, p. ix.

<sup>100</sup> Poe, 'Marginalia' [Part XV], p. 336.

<sup>101</sup> *LEAP*, II, p. 646.



might perceive Poe's society. The title 'Mellonta Tauta' is from Sophocles and translates from Greek as 'these things are in the future'. The narrator, Pundita, is traveling in a hot air balloon, pondering 'ancient' history, keeping a journal addressed to her friend along the way.<sup>102</sup> Pundita and her fellow citizens, the 'Futurians', as Mabbott calls them, are confused about many events from history. They mistake Scottish poet and novelist James Hogg for English philosopher Francis Bacon ("Baconian," you must know, was an adjective invented as equivalent to Hog-ian and more euphonious and dignified'), they mistakenly remember Aristotle as 'Hindoo Aries Tottle', and Samuel Morse, inventor of the telegraph, they refer to as 'Horse'. The ancient civilizations, as the Futurians know, were the 'Jurmaines', 'Vrinch', 'Inglitch', 'Amriccans', and 'Kanawdians'. That the historians of the future have muddled reality underscores the unreliable nature of how we perceive history itself. The greater target of Poe's criticism, however, is democracy and the threat to the individual in a government in which decisions are based on the outcome of majority votes.

In majority rule democracy, for Poe, voters take on the role of a mob, the 'Democratic rabble', or as Scott might say, the 'unwashed artificers', that controlled the fate of America. With every man voting, the position of the individual is questioned:

I rejoice, my dear friend, that we live in an age so enlightened that no such a thing as an individual is supposed to exist. [...] Is it not really difficult to comprehend upon what principle of interest our forefathers acted? Were they so blind as not to perceive that the destruction of a myriad of individuals is only so much positive advantage to the mass!<sup>103</sup>

Not only did Poe perceive democracy as a threat to his individual rights, but he was also concerned that expanding the electorate meant the uneducated and incompetent would have a voice in deciding America's fate. As such, he criticized government policies on expanding suffrage. Pundita insists that 'universal suffrage gave opportunity for fraudulent scheme', but it is from the voice of Monos in the short story 'The Colloquy of Monos and Una' that Poe's resistance to extended voting rights is given full force:

Among other odd ideas, that of universal equality gained ground; and in the face of analogy and of God — in despite of the loud warning voice of the laws of *gradation* so visibly pervading all things in Earth and Heaven — wild attempts at an omni-prevalent Democracy were made.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> It is noteworthy that the date of the journal is on April Fool's Day, 2048.

<sup>103</sup> Mabbott, II, p. 290; III, p. 1294.

<sup>104</sup> Mabbott, III, p. 1300; II, p. 610.

Both Monos and Pundita criticize a form of government that favors the masses over the individual. In both of these short stories, the Gothic mode plays a distinct role in Poe's criticism of American politics. Pundita can look into her history and discover the eventual outcome of American democracy, while Monos offers a perspective from a heavenly spirit. Nonetheless, the threat to the individual is the reason that Poe, like Scott, also detested Social reform. 'The modern reformist philosophy', Poe writes in *Marginalia*, 'annihilates the individual by way of aiding the mass'. The modern reformist philosophy Poe was so critical of was in many ways epitomized in the contemporary utilitarian philosophies of Jeremy Bentham and James Mill.

Poe understood that Utilitarianism favored profit over pleasure, but perhaps as importantly, promoted an ideology of 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number'.<sup>105</sup> Indeed, the voting reform in Scotland that so disturbed Scott was also based on the utilitarian political theories of the very same James Mill.<sup>106</sup> Utilitarianism would certainly have been contradictory to a poor man of letters who already felt his rights slipping away. Poe describes the Utilitarians as:

a race of time-servers and money-lovers — children of Baal and worshippers of Mammon — Benthams, who, to spare thought and economize fancy, first cruelly invented the Kaleidoscope, and then established jointstock companies to twirl it by steam.<sup>107</sup>

Poe's dire financial situation surely had him question money-lovers, but he insists that there are ways to profit other than financially. In the preface to *Marginalia*, Poe declares that taking notes 'affords me pleasure; which is profit, in despite of Mr. Bentham with Mr. Mill on his back'.<sup>108</sup> Poe viewed Utilitarianism as a further threat to his individual rights, just as he viewed corruption and loss of liberty as inherent characteristics of democracy. Of course, Poe was not the only one to recognize these potential weaknesses in a democratic society

Alexis de Tocqueville also discusses corruption and the erosion of individual rights in his two-volume *Democracy in America*, first published in 1835 (Volume 1) and 1840 (Volume 2). De Tocqueville concludes that in a democracy, a 'germ of tyranny' exists because of the way in which the majority rules. For de Tocqueville, 'it is an impious and

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<sup>105</sup> Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, 1907 reprint of 1823 edition. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), p. 5.

<sup>106</sup> Ferguson, p. 105.

<sup>107</sup> Mabbott, II, p. 498.

<sup>108</sup> Edgar Allan Poe, 'Marginalia' [Part I], *United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, 15 (November 1844), 484–94 (p. 484).

detestable maxim that in matters of government the majority of a people has the right to do everything, and nevertheless I place the origin of all powers in the will of the majority'. A minority wronged by the majority has no recourse. As an example of where such an issue had already created problems in America, de Tocqueville points to a riot in Baltimore in 1812, where a newspaper had printed an article that openly opposed the War of 1812. An angry mob brutally attacked the editor of the paper before demolishing the printing presses and destroying property. Though some of the rioters were arrested, the mob gathered again at night and broke them out of prison, whereupon they proceeded to attack the editor again, this time killing him. The police arrested the rioters again, but they were acquitted during the trial. For de Tocqueville, this scene gives a 'striking instance of the excesses which may be occasioned by the despotism of the majority'. Like Poe, de Tocqueville is concerned about the possibilities of losing individual rights and the potential for mob rule in a democratic government, where the minority has little or no recourse. Additionally, de Tocqueville insists, 'Intrigue and corruption are the natural defects of elective government'.<sup>109</sup>

Poe also viewed corruption as an unavoidable defect of democracy. He had already seen such corruption first hand in the debacle of the 1824 Presidential election. Pundita's philosophers posit that in a democracy, 'rascality *must* predominate — in a word, that a republican government *could* never be anything but a rascally one'. The 'inevitable evils' of a democratic government fraught with corruption and 'rascality' can only come to one end:

The matter [of the corruption in a Republic] was put to an abrupt issue by a fellow of the name of *Mob*, who took everything into his own hands and set up a despotism [...]. This Mob (a foreigner, by the by), is said to have been the most odious of all men that ever encumbered the earth. He was a giant in stature — insolent, rapacious, filthy; had the gall of a bullock with the heart of an hyena and the brains of a peacock.

Though Poe personifies the mob, he presents his Republican Mob much in the same ways that Scott portrayed both the Parisian mob and the mob in *Guy Mannering*. In those cases, discussed in the previous section, the Gothic presents one of Scott's political anxieties in a very specific way. Scott stages the violence and destruction created by mobs in a way meant to excite fear and horror. He uses words such as dim, shroud, hid,

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<sup>109</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. by Henry Reeve, Reprint of 1838 Edition, (Clark, New Jersey: The Lawbook Exchange, Ltd., 2003), pp. 242, 116.

and obscurity, but the threat from the mob is certainly real. Scott's mob seems to have quietly slipped in when no one was looking, hidden and obscure, while Poe's mob marches in through the front door of a government in which corruption is inevitable. In Scott's description in *Guy Mannering*, the mob is stern, fierce, wild, ferocious, and vulgar. Poe's mob is odious, insolent, rapacious, and filthy. What we see here is both Scott and Poe frightening their readers, warning them of the potential dangers of mobs, underscoring the violence and incivility of proletariat uprisings and civil unrest. Poe, like Scott before him, emphasizes the failure of the French republican model to express concerns about his own political arena. For Pundita, evidence leads her society to conclude that there is no viable way for democracy ever to function as the founders intended:

As for Republicanism, no analogy could be found for it upon the face of the earth — unless we except the case of the “prairie dogs,” an exception which seems to demonstrate, if anything, that democracy is a very admirable form of government — for dogs.<sup>110</sup>

Poe's Futurians echo de Tocqueville's concerns, and in fact, Scott's anxieties, over corruption, civil unrest, and mob rule.

Concerns over a government controlled by the inept masses echo throughout many of Poe's other works as well, such as 'Some Words with a Mummy', this time a satirical look at Poe's present from the past. The narrator explains to a revived Egyptian mummy, Count Allamistakeo, 'the great beauty and importance of Democracy'. Initially, the count has no understanding of the word 'politics' until a politician is caricatured in chalk. The Count tells of an ancient civilization that was very similar to the narrator's democracy until the government turned into 'the most odious and insupportable despotism that ever was heard of upon the face of the Earth'. The peaceful government fell at the hands of a 'usurping tyrant' that Allamistakeo remembers was called '*Mob*' (Poe's emphasis).<sup>111</sup> Whether viewed from the Count's past or Pundita's future, a government modeled on democratic principles has a number of potential problems, and it is certainly telling of Poe's view that his protagonist is named All-a-mistake. Poe expresses his anxieties concerning American politics from a perspective of the future, the past, and from a heavenly spirit.

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<sup>110</sup> Mabbott, III, p. 1300.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., pp. 1193-94.

Poe did not limit his criticisms of American idealism to attacks on a democratic form of government. At various points in his career, he also seems to attack ideas related to Manifest Destiny, frontier writing, the American reading public, literary critics, and even the notion of a national literature. In his notes for the introduction to 'The Living Writers of America', for example, he writes:

What is a true Nationality — [...] — there should be *no* nationality — the world the proper stage — [...] — nationality means, according to Mathews, toadying Americans & abusing foreigners right or wrong.<sup>112</sup>

Poe was referencing Cornelius Mathews, whose poem 'Wakondah' he had caustically criticized in the February 1842 issue of *Graham's Magazine*. The poem is based on a story of Native Americans and their Supreme Being known as Wakondah. Poe claims the work 'from beginning to end, is trash'. In a review of James Fenimore Cooper's *Wyandotte*, Poe expresses his opinion of frontier writing or 'life in the Wilderness' writing in general, declaring that 'success or popularity is, with such a subject, expected as a matter of course, a failure might be properly regarded as conclusive evidence of imbecility on the part of the author'.<sup>113</sup> What is also interesting in the passage quoted above is that Poe here seems to be rejecting the tribal mentality that Scott had expressed in his letters from Malachi Malagrowther, rejecting an 'us' versus 'them' attitude by declaring that nationality should not be an issue, at least as it concerns the criticism of literature.

Poe's criticism of the American reading public and American literary critics have also provided additional fodder for accusations that he did not fit the American democratic model. In the preface to a book review in *The Southern Literary Messenger* of 1836, he writes, '[We Americans] often find ourselves involved in the gross paradox of liking a stupid book the better because, sure enough, its stupidity is American'.<sup>114</sup> Such sentiment further separates Poe from his contemporaries, and especially from the

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<sup>112</sup> Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Living Writers of America', 1846, MA-624, Pierpont Morgan Library Department of Literary and Historical Manuscripts, New York. Digital Copy at The Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore <<http://www.eapoe.org/Works/misc/livingw.htm>> [accessed 5 August 2014].

<sup>113</sup> Harrison, XI, pp. 26, 205.

<sup>114</sup> Edgar Allan Poe, 'Critical Notices' [Drake-Halleck Review], *Southern Literary Messenger*, 2.5 (April 1836), 326-340 (p. 326).

writers that Matthiessen canonizes. Melville, for example, writes in ‘Hawthorne and His Mosses’:

Let America then prize and cherish her writers; yea, let her glorify them. [...] let America first praise mediocrity even, in her own children, before she praises [...] the best excellence in the children of any other land. Let her own authors, I say, have the priority of appreciation.<sup>115</sup>

For Matthiessen, such sentiment epitomizes American nationalism. It is for this very type of thought that Matthiessen includes Melville in his survey of prominent American literary figures. For Poe, however, Melville’s praise of American books simply because they are American would have been yet another example of ‘toadying Americans and abusing foreigners’.

Poe, especially early in his career, resisted many of the democratic ideas held by his contemporaries, and largely resisted the call for a national literature, at least a national literature in the tradition of Cooper, Child, Sedgwick, Hawthorne, and other American writers who focused on themes such as America’s history, westward expansion, and Native Americans.<sup>116</sup> Poe was seen as often ignoring American ideology in an era when most American writers were focused on creating a national literary identity by writing of frontiers and democracy. Poe never wrote of western expansion or frontier exploration, with the sole exception of *The Journal of Julius Rodman*, which he never completed. In fact, some critics have noted the Eurocentric nature of so many of Poe’s tales as evidence of his resistance to American ideas. T. S. Eliot, for example, describes Poe as ‘a kind of displaced European’.<sup>117</sup> Baudelaire suggests:

The United States was for Poe only a vast prison, [...] his interior life, spiritual as a poet, spiritual even as a drunkard, was but one perpetual effort to escape the influence of this anti pathological

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<sup>115</sup> Herman Melville, ‘Hawthorne and His Mosses’

<<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~MA96/atkins/cm mosses.html>> [accessed 27 February 2016].

<sup>116</sup> Some critics have noted a turn in Cooper’s stance towards American democracy late in his career. Henning Goldback, for example, notes Cooper’s late career ‘attitude against the new mass-democratic spirit in America’, a shift in the authors attitude towards democracy most notable following his *Letter to his Countrymen* of 1834. See Henning Goldback, ‘Poe and Cooper: A Comparison, Between an American Democrat and a Southern Gentleman’, *James Fenimore Cooper: His Country and His Art*, Papers from the 1997 Cooper Seminar (No. 11), ed. by Hugh C. MacDougall (New York: The State University of New York College at Oneonta, 1997), pp. 53-55 <<http://external.oneonta.edu/cooper/articles/suny/1997suny-goldbaek.html>> [accessed 27 April 2017].

<sup>117</sup> Thomas Stearns Eliot, ‘From Poe to Valery’, in *To Criticize the Critic and Other Writings* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), pp. 27–42 (p. 29).

atmosphere. There is no more pitiless dictator than that of “Public Opinion” in democratic societies. [...] We might say that from the impious love of liberty has been born a new tyranny — the tyranny of fools — which, in its insensible ferocity, resembles the idol of Juggernaut.<sup>118</sup>

Both Eliot’s and Baudelaire’s points are well taken. The American culture of the time was certainly antipathetical, at least towards Poe, and it is certainly easy to see how one might view him as a displaced European. Unquestionably, Poe has been guilty of capturing American stories and translocating them to European locales, such as the case in ‘The Mystery of Marie Roget’, the second story featuring Parisian detective C. Auguste Dupin. Poe based the story on a series of real-life events that occurred in New York in July 1841. The body of the young Mary Cecilia Rogers, a part-time employee at a local tobacco shop, was found floating in the Hudson River. The investigators later determined that she had been murdered. Poe may have been familiar with Mary, as it has been suggested that he was a frequent patron of the tobacco shop where she worked.<sup>119</sup> Newspapers across the country (and the world) sensationalized the story of her murder, yet it remains unsolved even today. Since the death of Mary, there have been many speculations about the identity of her murderer.<sup>120</sup> However, in Poe’s fictionalized account of the death of Mary Rogers, he uproots the entire stage of the murder and moves it across the Atlantic into Europe. New Yorker Mary Rogers becomes Parisian Marie Roget, New York becomes Paris, and the Hudson River transforms into the River Seine. ‘Marie Roget’ was certainly not the only story Poe set in a foreign locale. In fact, J. Gerald Kennedy notes that 83% of Poe’s tales published prior to 1843 ‘relied on recognizably foreign subjects, settings, or situations’.<sup>121</sup> Literary tactics such as relocating his tales to foreign lands certainly fueled claims that Poe was somehow un-American or resistant to creating an American literary identity.

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<sup>118</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *Edgar Allan Poe: His Life and Works*, trans. by H. Curwen (London: John Camden Hotten, 1873), p. 2.

<sup>119</sup> Douglass MacGowan, ‘The Beautiful Cigar Girl — The Murder Mystery of Mary Rogers — Crime Library’, *Crime Library* <[http://www.crimelibrary.com/notorious\\_murders/classics/mary\\_rogers/2.html](http://www.crimelibrary.com/notorious_murders/classics/mary_rogers/2.html)> [accessed 12 August 2014].

<sup>120</sup> In his 1955 book *The Fabulous Originals*, author Irving Wallace unconvincingly implicates Poe himself as a suspect in the murder. Irving Wallace, *The Fabulous Originals: Lives of Extraordinary People Who Inspired Memorable Characters in Fiction* (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1956), p. 194.

<sup>121</sup> J. Gerald Kennedy, *The American Turn of Edgar Allan Poe* (Baltimore: The Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore and The Enoch Pratt Free Library, 2002), p. 5.

Despite Poe's criticisms of American government and an overwhelmingly Eurocentric disposition in many of his tales, more recently, some critics have suggested that Poe moved more towards mainstream ideas of democracy and nation building later in his career. Kennedy marks this change in 1843, with the publication of 'The Gold Bug', in what he calls Poe's 'American turn'. From 1844 onward, Poe generally shifts his tales from Europe to mostly center on American locations and American themes. Additionally, his outward resistance to a national literature softened.<sup>122</sup> He became a member of Young America, an influential New York group headed by Evert A. Duyckinck specifically chartered to promote nationalism through American literature. Duyckinck was friends with Cornelius Mathews, the very poet whose works Poe had so harshly criticized as being 'trash'.<sup>123</sup> Just over two years following that criticism, Poe writes to Mathews:

Could I imagine that, at any moment, you regarded a certain impudent and flippant critique as more than a matter to be laughed at, I would proffer you an apology on the spot. Since I scribbled the article in question, you yourself have given me fifty good reasons for being ashamed of it.<sup>124</sup>

Poe's alignment with the Young Americans suggests he had the similar goal of creating 'nationality in its purest, highest, broadest sense'.<sup>125</sup> As well as signing on with the pro-nationalistic Young Americans, Poe also became a member of the American Copyright Club, a group devoted to securing copyright laws designed to protect American writers. Of course, as we saw in Chapter One, Poe certainly had motivations other than just the promotion of nationalism to join such a group.

Joining groups whose charters involved promoting democracy and a national literature seem to contradict Poe's earlier positions and could have possibly been merely political moves on Poe's part. In fact, one of the difficulties in understanding Poe's

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<sup>122</sup> Kennedy also argues that even before his American turn, the Eurocentric nature of Poe's early tales was not meant to criticize American values or American culture, but instead provided Poe with a means to deride an 'imaginary Europe wracked by aristocratic decadence, violence, and class subjugation'. J. Gerald Kennedy, p. 6.

<sup>123</sup> Poe, 'Living Writers'.

<sup>124</sup> *LEAP*, I, p. 245.

<sup>125</sup> Pollin, *The Collected Writings of Edgar Allan Poe*, III, p. 172. This was part of a speech Mathews had given to the Eucleian Society of the University of New York. Poe quoted Mathews in *The Broadway Journal* of July 1845, describing Mathews' words as an 'address which embodies all that there is any necessity for saying' about the Young Americans.



political positions, and perhaps one of the reasons critics have been so divided in determining his stance towards democracy and American values, is that he consistently contradicts himself. For example, the obvious contradiction in his notes to the preface of *The Living Writers of America*, where he suggests there should be no such thing as nationality, is that he dogmatically criticizes the idea of a national literature in the preface to a book that was to focus solely on American writers, where he insists, '[The] General object I propose is to convey to foreigners (the English especially) and to those among my own countrymen who cannot be supposed conversant with the *arcana*, a full view of our Literature, a desideratum'.<sup>126</sup>

Whether Poe's move towards mainstream ideas of democracy later in his career was mere political maneuvering or if he actually had a change of opinion cannot be known, but Poe certainly had issues with American democracy. He had witnessed the corruption in American politics first hand, and he feared the possibility that such corruption could lead to civil unrest and mob rule. He also felt as though democracy was antagonistic towards artistic expression. He writes in 'Marginalia', 'Is it, or is it not a fact, that the air of a Democracy agrees better with mere Talent than with Genius?'<sup>127</sup> He expected better results from American Democracy, writing, 'the proper *results* of good government — the happiness of a people — improvement in the condition of mankind'.<sup>128</sup> Poe's democracy was not making him happy, nor was it improving the position of mankind, at least not in Poe's view:

The most momentous evil [...] arising from the want of an International Copy-right Law, is the bitter sense of wrong aroused in the hearts of all literary men [...] *against the sole form of government, which not only robs it upon the highway, but justifies the robbery as a convenient and commendable thing, and glories in [i]t when cleverly done.*<sup>129</sup>

The irony of Poe's seemingly hostile stance towards democracy is that it is widely held that the author died as the result of 'cooping', a common practice in his day in which visitors to a city would be plied with alcohol or drugs until near senseless and used as a

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<sup>126</sup> Poe, 'Living Writers'.

<sup>127</sup> Harrison, XVI, p. 152.

<sup>128</sup> Harrison, IX, p. 54.

<sup>129</sup> Edgar Allan Poe, 'Pay of American Authors', *Evening Mirror* [New York], 1.93 (24 January 1845), p. 2 <<http://www.eapoe.org/works/essays/em450101.htm>> [accessed 27 February 2016].

repeat voter for elections. Poe spent a considerable amount of his career questioning democracy and voting likely contributed to his early death. Despite all of the potential evils of democracy, Poe may have still viewed it as the best option. ‘To be sure’, Pundita writes, ‘whenever we meet a balloon we have a chance of perceiving our rate, and then, I admit, things do not appear so very bad’.<sup>130</sup>

In many ways, Poe’s political positions seem to be just the opposite of Scott’s. While Scott supported both the Union and Scottish nationalism, Poe was generally skeptical about American democracy and American idealism. In fact, he was in many ways oppositional towards American exceptionalism, democracy, western expansion, and the notions of an American national literature. Pundita, Allamistakeo, and Monos, for example, all criticize egalitarian democracy and question whether it can be a practical form of government. Under the surface, however, we see how Poe’s oppositional positions may not be as dogmatic as some of his fiction suggests. He joins the Young Americans to promote American nationalism. He criticizes Cooper for his attack on democracy. He intends on publishing a work focusing on American writers. He joins a group whose sole purpose is to promote a national literature. Even though Pundita criticizes democracy, she still sees it as the best practical choice.

Trying to interpret the politics of Scott and Poe through the fictions we discussed can be misleading, but including their nonfiction writings as well as their actions in the exploration underscores several interesting points. It becomes apparent that they shared similar concerns and anxieties relating to the fate of their respective governments. They both express concerns about the possibility of civil unrest, mob rule, and social deterioration. They were both openly critical about the uneducated or working classes having a voice in the future of their respective countries. Interestingly, both Scott and Poe perceived the largest threat to their countries’ political economy not from a foreign power, but from internal strife. For Scott, these were the desperate rabble, the unwashed artificers who were given the right to vote in the election reforms of 1832. For Poe, it was the Democratic rabble, the mob, who began to gain political sway as the American Republic began to morph into a Jacksonian Democracy that was intent on greatly extending voting rights. They both draw on their Gothic imaginations to present these concerns to their audiences in a way meant to scare their readers. Scott repeatedly stages brutal and violent mobs throughout his novels, detailing the brutality and destruction of

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<sup>130</sup> Mabbott, III, p. 1292.

proletariat uprisings. He openly resists expanded suffrage and derides the common citizen as being not intelligent enough to make proper decisions for Scotland. These are the very same issues that Poe posits throughout his fiction. The common American citizen is unable to conceive of a working government, and Poe also derides an egalitarian democracy.

Given the similarities of the political concerns expressed by both Scott and Poe, it seems as though any argument suggesting that scholars can use the *unique* pressures of an American Democracy to demarcate British and American Gothic forms seems simplistic. Though the American democratic model itself may have been unique, certainly the anxieties that Poe articulated throughout his works were long before posited by Scott. Additionally, the political anxieties expressed through the Gothic fiction of Scott and Poe outlined throughout this chapter make it clear that their fictions were far from mere sensationalism or anti- Enlightenment texts.

### Conclusion

This thesis has examined a wide variety of Gothic characteristics, though necessarily selective characteristics, in order to fill some critical gaps concerning transatlantic studies of Gothic fiction. The aspects of Gothic fiction under consideration here- book history, political economy, the grotesque aesthetic, and peritext- were chosen not only because they all represent areas that benefit from a more detailed study in relation to transatlantic Gothic, but also because these issues in some ways tell a story of how writers of Gothic fiction navigated through a difficult publishing industry while working in a genre that, although publicly popular, was often being ridiculed and scorned by many critics.

The first chapter demonstrates that archival research of Scott and Poe together shows a shared network of readers, publishers, editors, critics, and booksellers. Harsh critical responses to Gothic fiction was abundant on both sides of the Atlantic, as ideas and thoughts crossed back and forth. Scott and Poe both had a keen understanding of the publishing industry, and they both understood what this poor critical reception meant to their Gothic texts. One can see the insecurities they felt about their own works as they publish anonymously, separating themselves from their Gothic creations. Additionally, they both felt the need to anonymously review their own works. It is certainly telling that Scott gave his Gothic creation a poor review, thus further separating himself from the Gothic fiction that was receiving such poor criticism. Both Scott and Poe wanted to be popular amongst the reading public, but they also wanted critics to take their works more seriously, to accept their literary creations as works of art.

Chapter Two demonstrates two of the ways that Scott, Poe, and other early writers of Gothic fiction worked towards making their texts more critically respectable. One of the most obvious ways is the 'motto-mania' of the early nineteenth century, as writers of Gothic fiction attempted to lend their works cultural credibility through epigraphs. Epigraphs do this in three ways. First, by its mere presence. Simply having an epigraph was fashionable. Secondly, the epigraph shows that the author is an intellectual, that he or she is familiar with a wide variety of texts. Finally, by quoting prominent authors in their epigraphs, they were responding to Wordsworth's criticism that Gothic fiction was responsible for the neglect of 'the invaluable works of our elder writers'. Likewise, one of the relevant functions of the use of footnotes in Gothic fiction was to appease the critics. One of the most common criticisms aimed at early Gothic fiction was that it was often too unbelievable or implausible, but writers began to use footnotes to provide the

supernatural elements in the story with a sense of plausibility and keep the work from appearing overly fantastic. Both epigraphs and footnotes work towards appeasing the emerging mass marketplace and the critics who held at least some influence over the commercial success or failure of a text.

In many ways, it worked. Gothic fiction, or at the very least Gothic elements in fiction, began to receive better criticism. The confidence of these writers seemed to grow. As such, they began to develop and refine their own aesthetic categories. One of the most important aesthetics that emerged or was most refined was the grotesque. This was an aesthetic that fit well with the Gothic genre because part of this aesthetic requires shock or horror. Yet by combining this shock or horror with humor, the reader is forced to reassess what he or she had read. The grotesque hits hard.

The closing chapter of this thesis briefly explores some of the politics of Scott and Poe. This examination seems necessary because throughout the first three chapters, politics continuously appear. Generally, politics were an important part of Gothic fiction. Yet the politics touched on in the first three chapters is seen mostly through the fictions of Scott and Poe. Chapter Four also shows how reading the politics of an author through their fictions alone can be misleading.

Besides telling a story of how Gothic writers navigated a difficult publishing industry working in a genre that had been so poorly reviewed, this thesis brings to light other aspects of Gothic fiction. For example, reading Scott and Poe through a transatlantic critical lens also challenges conventional wisdom that delineates British and American models of the Gothic genre, a wisdom that in many ways constrains critical interpretations. By abandoning these geopolitical borders, it becomes clear that new avenues of research present themselves. Approaching book history from this perspective, for example, underscores the complex relationships between author, publisher, printer, critic, and audience, but it also highlights the fact that these relationships transcend British or American borders. They cross the Atlantic over and over. The texts of Scott and Poe become very much a part of a cultural exchange across political economies, so much so that scholars such as Todd can appropriate the *Waverley* novels and claim that they were, in fact, American literature<sup>1</sup>, as I discussed in the first chapter of this thesis. Interrogating these political economies in Chapter 4 further strains arguments that

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<sup>1</sup> Todd, p. 104.

confine Gothic within national boundaries by demonstrating that the concerns that Poe considers in his works echo the fears that Scott addresses throughout many of his novels.

Another advantage to choosing Scott and Poe for a parallel study is that doing so reveals some of the ways in which Gothic fiction shifted from what one might consider an external genre more towards what many critics now consider internal. Scott's Gothic, for instance, is often located in the landscape and in the history. In many ways, Scott's Gothic is external. There are supernatural beings that haunt a region or a landscape, for example the haunted woods in *Count Robert of Paris*, the ghost light in the tower in *Woodstock*, the 'haunted side of the house' in *Rob Roy*, the haunted moors in *The Monastery*, the supernatural appearances at Mucklestane Moor in *The Black Dwarf*, or the Duke of Normandy's haunted tower in *Quentin Durward*. There are also ghosts and hauntings tied to specific families and family histories, such as the Bodach Glas, the White Lady of Avenal, Madge Wildfire, and Meg Merrilies. History and landscape become key ingredients in Scott's Gothic. The grotesque description of Sir Robert Redgauntlet's death discussed in Chapter 3, for example, is Scott exploring feudal relationships of the past and comparing them to modern post-Union relationships in Scotland. For Poe, however, the Gothic becomes internal; the scenes become much more confined. Poe shifts the focus from history and landscape to the human psyche as he explores the nature of the human soul. While Scott's characters are often mobile, traveling throughout Scotland or Europe, Poe's characters are typically isolated or confined. Characters such as Roderick Usher are unable to move beyond the confines of their immediate surroundings. Even when Poe's characters become somewhat mobile, such as Pundita racing across the globe in her hot air balloon, they are often unable to interact with others, they remain isolated. Scott's characters can escape from the ghosts, goblins, and specters that haunt his novels because these preternatural beings exist in the external world, meaning the characters throughout the novels can simply either avoid the haunted areas or flee when feeling threatened or frightened. Running away, however, is not an option for Roderick Usher because his environment, the Usher house, is a projection of his own internal reality from which he is unable to escape. Of course, Scott was creating and working in a new genre, the historical novel, so it is certainly expected that his Gothic is rooted in place and time. Poe, too, was fashioning a new genre, the macabre short story, in which he often intentionally omitted both place and time.

Creating new genres also meant creating new identities, and both Scott and Poe consciously sought to separate their own works from the popular sensational German

Romanticism of the period. For Scott, this separation is arguably most evident in his review of Hoffman that I discussed in Chapter 3, in which he seems to echo the criticism Wordsworth had articulated about Gothic fiction. Scott derides what he viewed as Hoffman's overwrought imagination and the Gothic cliché's in his works. Poe, too, explicitly separated his fictions from German Romanticism, perhaps most notably in the introduction to *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*, also discussed in Chapter 3. By creating a divide between their works and German Romanticism, Scott and Poe were trying to cater to both public and critical taste, providing the sensationalism of the supernatural that had become so popular while admonishing the overly fantastic that had received so much negative criticism in German Romantic fiction. Yet in examining the grotesque literary aesthetic, it becomes clear that even while they both explicitly distanced themselves from German Romanticism, they both continued to embrace the same clichés, tropes, and conventions found in the early works of Hoffman and Goethe. Such uses of these characteristics were part of a process of developing and characterizing their own particular style of writing. As a part of this process, they also refined the grotesque as a newly articulated literary aesthetic category that defined their works more clearly.

These same insecurities often led both Scott and Poe to feel the need to defend themselves and their works. For example, Scott anonymously wrote himself a scathing review, but in that review, he strenuously defended 'the author's' depictions of history as authentic.<sup>2</sup> Again, in the footnote found in *Ivanhoe* discussed in Chapter 1, he also responded to criticism related to his portrayal of historic events, insisting that if his descriptions of history were not completely authentic, at least they were completely plausible.<sup>3</sup> Poe also frequently defended his writings, perhaps most notably in his response to White's complaints that certain passages in 'Berenice' were too horrible. Horrible, Poe told White, is what the public wants. Horrible sells magazines. Nonetheless, Poe responded to White's criticism by removing the offensive paragraphs. In the introduction to *Tales of the Grotesque*, Poe also defended his writings against claims that his works were rooted in German Romanticism, whether these claims were

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<sup>2</sup> Scott, 'Transcript of Scott's Review'.

<sup>3</sup> *EEWN*, xxvb, p. 19.

real or imagined. ‘Terror is not of Germany’, he wrote, ‘but of the soul’.<sup>4</sup> Even in his anonymous review of his own works, he too defended ‘the author’s’ style as ‘original’.<sup>5</sup>

This thesis is an attempt to identify and discuss various characteristics of the Gothic fiction of Scott and Poe through a transatlantic lens. I chose Scott and Poe for this study because they, perhaps more than any other set of writers, demonstrate the richness of a transatlantic approach to early nineteenth century Gothic fiction.

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<sup>4</sup> Poe, *Tales of the Grotesque*, I.

<sup>5</sup> Poe, ‘Review of E. A. Poe’s “Tales”’, pp. 316–19.



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